MY FOURTEEN MONTHS AT THE FRONT

"Billy" Robinson, Mounted and in Uniform. *Frontispiece.*

MY FOURTEEN MONTHS AT THE FRONT

AN AMERICAN BOY'S BAPTISM OF FIRE

BY

WILLIAM J. ROBINSON

ILLUSTRATED

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To

MY MOTHER

WHO SO BRAVELY BORE THE HEARTACHES AND
ANXIETY OF EVERY SOLDIER'S MOTHER,
THIS BOOK IS LOVINGLY DEDICATED

PREFACE

PRIOR to my arrival in England the idea of participating in the great war had never entered my head. I went abroad on business, and I expected to return to this country as soon as my work was completed. It seemed, though, that Fate decreed otherwise. I had been in England a good many times before, and in France and Belgium, too, for that matter. My father was a sea captain, and I was born aboard his ship; in fact I lived the first six years of my life on shipboard. This last trip across the Atlantic made the twenty-third time for me, so I was quite at home in the British Isles. Almost before I knew it I had taken the step that was responsible for the most terrible yet wonderful experience that ever came to me.

In telling my story I have tried to take the important events and set them down in chronological order; I have endeavored also to link them together so as to make it possible for the reader to follow me through the principal happenings during my time of service. Many of the more sordid details of this great war I have been obliged to leave out. I have dwelt neither on the horrors of war nor yet on the glory, but I have tried to picture the daily routine of the fighting man's life as it really is.

While my experiences, in comparison with those of many other soldiers, have been very ordinary, I trust that they have been interesting enough to merit some consideration from my readers.

I am indebted to the Boston Sunday Globe, for permission to use the photographs in this book.

W. J. R.

March 1, 1916.

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MY FOURTEEN MONTHS AT THE FRONT

CHAPTER I

SENT TO THE FRONT

THE 10th of September, 1914, was the day I landed in England. Exactly one week from that day I was notified that my job was gone, as the company I represented was in the hands of receivers.

I was disappointed, of course, but tried to look at the thing philosophically and to make the best of it. I bought my ticket for home, but as the boat on which I intended sailing did not leave for several days I proceeded to enjoy the remainder of my stay in England.

Things were certainly moving in England at that time and it seemed as if the whole country was "war mad." Very soon I was as enthusiastic as any of them and in London I made inquiries as to whether I could join the Army.

I was told that I would have no difficulty at all, but on second thought I decided to let well enough alone. The day before I was to sail from Liverpool I hesitated again and talked it over with an Army officer. He was so nice about explaining everything to me that I decided that I might do lots of worse things than to see a little of the biggest scrap the world has ever known.

That night I thought about the matter some more, and came to the conclusion that if they would take me into a cavalry regiment I would have a try at it. The next morning I enlisted and was made a trooper in the 5th Dragoon Guards. That same afternoon I was on my way to Aldershot, but had I known what I was going to go through I

don't think I would have been so lighthearted as I was. In the evening I was fitted out with my entire kit and informed that from now on I was a soldier.

I was assigned to a bed in the barracks, and from that time my troubles commenced. I was in with a crowd of old soldiers, men who had served from two to twenty years in the army, and while they were very decent chaps, they seemed to resent the fact that a "civie" had been pushed in on them. I was at once christened "Yank," and I believe they found a few other things to call me, too.

The next morning at 5 o'clock the sergeant came around and dug me out. He took me down to the stables and put me in with a bunch of "rookies" (recruits) who weren't any happier than I was. We were then instructed in the gentle art of grooming a horse. I couldn't seem to do anything right and they didn't hesitate to tell me so, either.

Then we were marched down to a breakfast of bread, bacon and tea, but we had as much

as we wanted. I felt a whole lot better after eating. Breakfast over we had room inspection, and as soon as that was over, we who were "rookies" were marched down to the riding school and handed over to the tyrant who ruled there.

I had expected to find horses all saddled, and it certainly was quite a shock to learn that we got our saddles only when we had earned them. In other words, we had to pass the bareback test before we even felt a saddle. There were no long explanations as to how a thing should be done. We were told once, and in as few words as possible. Then we had to do it.

After we had mastered the art of vaulting on a horse's back we got the "walk, march", then the "trot, march", then we had to drop the reins and ride with folded arms, and so it went until 12 o'clock, when we got an hour's rest. It was the same thing in the afternoon.

All one could hear was the riding master

singing his commands, "Walk, march! Trot, march! Halt!" and every once in a while he'd yell: "Hollow your backs! Hollow your backs! You're not driving a cab now. That's a horse you're on. He's got a head and tail and legs and everything. Why, I wouldn't trust you blighters to drive my ducks to water. There isn't one of you who could ride a table," etc., etc. We were dismissed at 4:30, and told that this was our routine for every day until we had passed out, and earned our saddles.

I don't think I was ever so tired in my life as I was that night, and I decided to turn in right after supper. That shows how much I knew about a barrack room. After supper all those who couldn't get permission to go out seemed to blame it on me, for I was battered around until they were tired of it, and when I finally got into my bed I was in a pretty bad way.

I soon found out that it was futile to try to get even: such an attempt only made

matters worse, and the only thing to do seemed to be to grin and bear it. The next morning we went down to riding school again, and had the same old drill all day, except that in the afternoon they turned us around so that our backs were toward the horse's head, and made us ride that way the rest of the day.

As I was crossing the parade ground in the evening a fellow who was in my room asked me how I felt. I told him in two words.

"Well," he said, "if you want to be let alone, you do as I tell you. To-night, when you go into the room, pick out the biggest man you can find, and don't say anything, but just walk up and paste him with all your might. You may get licked, and you may not, but you won't have much trouble afterwards, whichever way it comes out."

Well, I didn't know whether I'd have the nerve to do it or not, but the more I thought about it the more I thought he might be right. I hadn't passed through the door to the

barracks before the kidding started again, and I knew what would follow.

So I screwed up all the courage I could, and, seeing a big chap who was making a lot of talk, I swung as hard as I could and let him have it. I won't say anything about what happened to me, but the next afternoon I found I'd been unlucky as usual. The man I had picked was a heavyweight champion of the British Army in South Africa during the Boer War! Things were much better after that, though, and I made some mighty good friends among those fellows.

At first it amused me greatly to hear the men talk about the regiments they belonged to, but later I came to understand that their regiment means more to them than anything else. In peace time when a man joins the army he is obliged to learn the history of the regiment he joins from the day it was formed to the present day. Tradition plays a great part in the life of a regular soldier, and if there is a delicate spot in the history of his

regiment he is bound to hear of it from the men of other units, and if any derogatory remarks are passed, he feels himself honor bound to fight the one who is responsible for the remark.

If you should chance to ask a Royal Horse Artilleryman what regiment he belonged to, he would immediately straighten up and answer you somewhat after this fashion:

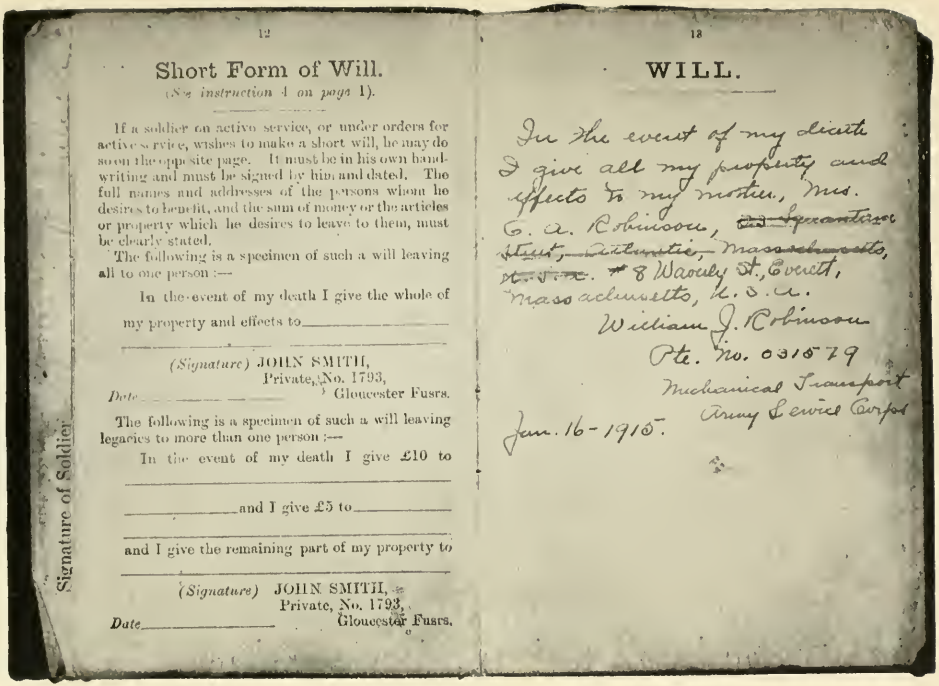
"I belong to the Royal Horse Artillery, the extreme right of the line, and the pride of the British Army." Then he would go on to tell when the regiment was formed, what it had accomplished, how many honors it has, how many Victoria Crosses the men belonging to it have won, how many titled officers belong to it, and so on, almost indefinitely.

Nearly all the regiments have nicknames and these names are very popular. The Royal Scots claim to be the oldest regiment in the British Army so they are popularly known as "Pontius Pilate's body-guard." The Gloucester regiment is the only regiment

in the British Army entitled to wear their cap badges in the back as well as in the front, and the reason this privilege has been granted them is that in some previous war the regiment became surrounded by the enemy, and turning back to back they fought until relief reached them. Another regiment has the nickname of the "Cherry Pickers." In some war of long ago this regiment was ordered to make a charge through a cherry orchard, and while passing through they forgot their duty, and stopped to pick the cherries. From that day to this they have been known as the "Cherry Pickers", and the trousers of their dress uniform are of cherry colored material. There is a certain Scotch regiment which, for some reason, had its kilts taken away, and now has to wear the trousers made of the same kind of plaid that the kilts were made of. The men are working like trojans in this war to win their kilts back again, and they will very probably be successful, as they have done some wonderful work.

Each regiment finds something to boast about, and the men never miss an opportunity. The Seventeenth Lancers are known as the "Death or Glory Boys", as their regimental badge is the skull and crossed bones, and "Death or Glory" is their motto. The Royal Engineers have more Victoria Crosses than any other regiment in the British Army, and it is no wonder, for theirs is a very dangerous work and affords plenty of opportunities for men to distinguish themselves. The first Victoria Cross won in the present war was won by a driver of an automobile, a member of the Army Service Corps.

Two days later word came around that the regiment was going to the front within the week. By that time I was covered with saddle sores, and was in agony the whole time. Although it requires nine months' training to turn out a full-fledged cavalryman I decided to try and go with the regiment somehow, and I didn't care how I went; anything to get out of that riding school.



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Short Form of Will.

(See instruction 4 on page 1).

If a soldier on active service, or under orders for active service, wishes to make a short will, he may do so on the opposite page. It must be in his own handwriting and must be signed by him and dated. The full names and addresses of the persons whom he desires to benefit, and the sum of money or the articles or property which he desires to leave to them, must be clearly stated.

The following is a specimen of such a will leaving all to one person :—

In the event of my death I give the whole of my property and effects to_____

(Signature) JOHN SMITH,
Private, No. 1793,
Gloucester Fusrs.

*Date*_____

The following is a specimen of such a will leaving legacies to more than one person :—

In the event of my death I give £10 to_____

_____ and I give £5 to_____

and I give the remaining part of my property to_____

(Signature) JOHN SMITH,
Private, No. 1793,
Gloucester Fusrs.

*Date*_____

Signature of Soldier

13

WILL.

In the event of my death I give all my property and effects to my mother, Mrs. C. A. Robinson, ~~and Spartan Street, Atlantic, Massachusetts, U.S.A.~~ # 8 Waverly St., Everett, Massachusetts, U.S.A.

William J. Robinson
Pte. No. 031579
Mechanical Transport
Army Service Corps

Jan. 16-1915.

A Soldier's Will.

So I went to a captain and told him the whole story, and I begged and pleaded with him to take me. He was certainly mighty nice about it, and in the end he attached me to his personal staff and took me that way.

Up to this time I hadn't thought much about what was going to happen when we reached the front, but what we got just before we sailed certainly made me do some tall thinking. We were issued identity discs first. These are hung around the neck and on them are stamped the soldier's name, regimental number, and his religion. Then we were given our pay books and were told to make our wills in the back of them. The chaplain next addressed us and prayed over us. He said that a great many of us would never see our homes again, and he prayed for those we would leave behind us.

When this was all over I was so scared I was beginning to think that the riding school might have its advantages after all. And

all the way over on the transport I was feeling mighty blue, and I was certain that I was never going to see England again, let alone the old U. S. A.

Crossing the channel we landed at Ostend at 4 o'clock in the morning on the eighth day of October, 1914. We had had nothing but "bullybeef" (canned corned beef) and hard biscuits all the way over, so the first place we sought when off duty was a restaurant.

I had chummed up with a fellow named Harry McGarrow, and also with the heavyweight who had taught me my little lesson. The latter was an old soldier and had served over twenty years in the Army. Nine years of his service had been done in India, so he knew the ropes pretty well.

As soon as we were off duty we three made for the nearest "estaminet" (or small café) in the Flemish town. We were just putting away some bread and eggs and coffee when the General commanding the division walked in with two of his officers. Of course we

jumped to attention and were about to withdraw, but he told us to finish our meal.

We were the only British troops to land at Ostend, and being the first the Belgians in that part had ever seen, we attracted a great deal of attention. Our horses and equipment seemed to amaze them. They would come up and handle the saddlery and ask, "Officier?" When we told them that it was just a trooper's equipment, and that all the others were just the same, they could not seem to get over it.

Although it was just after 4 o'clock in the morning, everybody seemed to be up and at work. The Belgian peasant has no interest in the eight-hour law at all; he works from before daylight until long after dark, and I often wondered how on earth they can see what they are doing. They seem to be very poor, and a franc means more to them than several dollars would to our farmers here. We left Ostend about 9 o'clock, in a hurry. No one seemed to know where

we were going, and all sorts of wild rumors were flying. As a matter of fact, we left at nine and the Germans were in there at six the same night, but we didn't know this until long afterward. The Belgians were most kind to us. They would bring up bread, eggs, wine, etc., and would not take any pay for the things at all. They were kindness itself and couldn't seem to do enough for us.

We did most of our traveling at night, and it wasn't much fun. We were not allowed to show a light of any kind and were even forbidden to smoke. As I said before, we hadn't any idea where we were going, but we were all sure we were on our way to meet the Germans, and there was a great deal of speculation as to when the meeting would come.

On the morning of the third day we came to the town of Roulers. A halt was called and we went about making ourselves comfortable. The people here were extremely cordial, too, and there was nothing that was

too much trouble for them to do for us. I got into a house where the man spoke English. He had been in the shipping business in Antwerp and knew a great many of the firms my father had dealt with. I really felt quite at home.

They asked me if I thought they had better move, or whether the Germans would ever get as far as Roulers. I'll never forget how I scorned the idea, and assured them that they were as safe there as they would be in England.

CHAPTER II

FIRST TIME UNDER FIRE

THAT afternoon about 4 o'clock shells began to drop into the town, and we made a quick exit. It was my first time under fire, and it was far from agreeable. I had often wondered whether I would be scared or not. Well, I found out then, and I certainly was scared. Since then I have often wondered about that family, and what they would think of me for advising them that they were in no danger. It didn't take us long to move, and it is a good thing it didn't, for as we were leaving the town we could see the Germans coming over the hill about four miles away. We wondered why we didn't go to meet them, but apparently our time was not yet. After that we knew

we were running away from them instead of going to meet them.

My duties during this time were very light. Attached to Capt. Colvin I had the care of his horse and saddlery, and had to ride behind him wherever he went when mounted. That is about all I had to do. Of course when the regiment went into action my duty would be to follow the captain.

Eventually we arrived at a little place called Zillebeke, and it was here that we joined up with the Seventh Infantry Division. There was very little doing, and nobody seemed to know just what we were going to do. Our chaps went out on patrols every day, and occasionally they would run into a German patrol and there would be a scrap.

During our stay at Zillebeke it was decided that all untrained men were to be returned to England to finish their training, and it looked very much as if I was going to land back in that riding school after all. While the matter was still undecided the

driver of Gen. Byng's car was killed, so I went to the captain and told him I could drive a car and I offered my services. He put in a word for me and I was given the car, but only until a regular driver could be secured.

It was while I was driving this car that I saw the city of Ypres for the first time. There had not been a shell in the place yet, and it certainly was a fine old town.

One afternoon I was waiting in the car for some staff officer in the Grand Place, when I heard a lot of shooting and shouting. I looked over in the direction of the noise and saw that some of our troops were all firing into the air. And there above was the first German taube I had ever seen. The pilot was flying very low and within easy rifle range, so I got excited and dragged out my rifle and began firing at him, too. His machine, I heard afterward, was absolutely riddled with bullets and he was wounded in three places. That was my first shot at

a German. It was in Ypres, too, that I saw seven hundred of the Prussian Guard brought in, and I must say that they were some of the finest looking soldiers I have ever seen. They were all great big fellows and our infantry chaps looked mighty small beside them.

It was soon after this that the Germans got their forces together and made their first attack on our positions outside of Ypres. I was in the town when the first shells landed, and the panic they created was something terrible to witness.

Men, women and children seemed to have but one idea, and that was to get out as quickly as possible. Old women would go staggering along with their belongings tied in each end of a bed sheet, and the whole thing slung around their neck. The streets were crowded with them. Men driving pigs and chickens before them, and the women leading and carrying children. The roads were littered with dead and dying, wounded horses screaming their horrible scream and

kicking. The din was terrible. Shells would burst in the roads choked with people, but the momentary gap would immediately fill and the panic-stricken people would sweep over their own dead.

At the time I couldn't seem to realize what was happening. I felt numb all over, but with an awful terror gripping me, and I longed to turn and fly with these people. I remember seeing my officer coming, so I got out and started the engine. There were two horses standing just behind the car, and as the officer went to step in, a piece of shell cut one of these horses in two; its forequarters were blown right through the belly of the other horse, and we were plastered with blood and skin and hair.

As soon as we were clear of the town we were all right, for while the shells continued screaming over us, they were still bursting in the town.

This was the beginning of the first battle of Ypres, in which the little Seventh Division

did the seemingly impossible; day and night the Germans poured shells into us, and still we held on. Then their artillery fire would slacken, and they would hurl their superior numbers against our "contemptible little army" in a vain endeavor to crush us by sheer weight, as it were.

The enemy seemed to rise out of the ground and sweep toward us like a great tidal wave, but our machine guns poured steel into them at the rate of six hundred shots per minute, and they'd go down like grass before the scythe. If they did reach our lines at all, they never went back to tell about it, for our boys knew that if the Germans broke us here, they would make but one stop between there and England, and that would be Calais.

It is my honest opinion that a man in action goes temporarily insane, for were it not so, how could any man continue to work a gun that was sending hundreds of his fellow-creatures into a heap of groaning, squirming death? That is exactly what was

happening. The Germans were climbing over heaps of their own dead, only to meet the same fate themselves. The deeds of valor which have escaped notice around the Ypres salient would fill at least one large book.

With the end of the first battle of Ypres our division retired to a village called St. Jean Capelle. While the Belgian civilians had been so nice to us on the way down from Ostend, I am sorry to say that we found them exactly the opposite here. We had not been in the town three hours before we had three Belgian peasants arrested and convicted of espionage.

There was a windmill on a hill just back of the village, and someone noticed that as soon as we entered the village this windmill started to go, although there wasn't a breath of air stirring. Investigation showed that two Belgians were signalling to the Germans in this way.

The other case was even worse. One of our police stopped an old Belgian with

a bag under his arm, and asked him what was in it. He replied that it contained nothing but a few vegetables. Something aroused our chap's suspicion, and on examination he found that it contained two pigeons with messages, giving our exact strength, attached to them. These men were taken to the rear and shot at once. Things like this make it very unpleasant for all concerned, and it is indeed exasperating when one considers that it is these people we were fighting for.

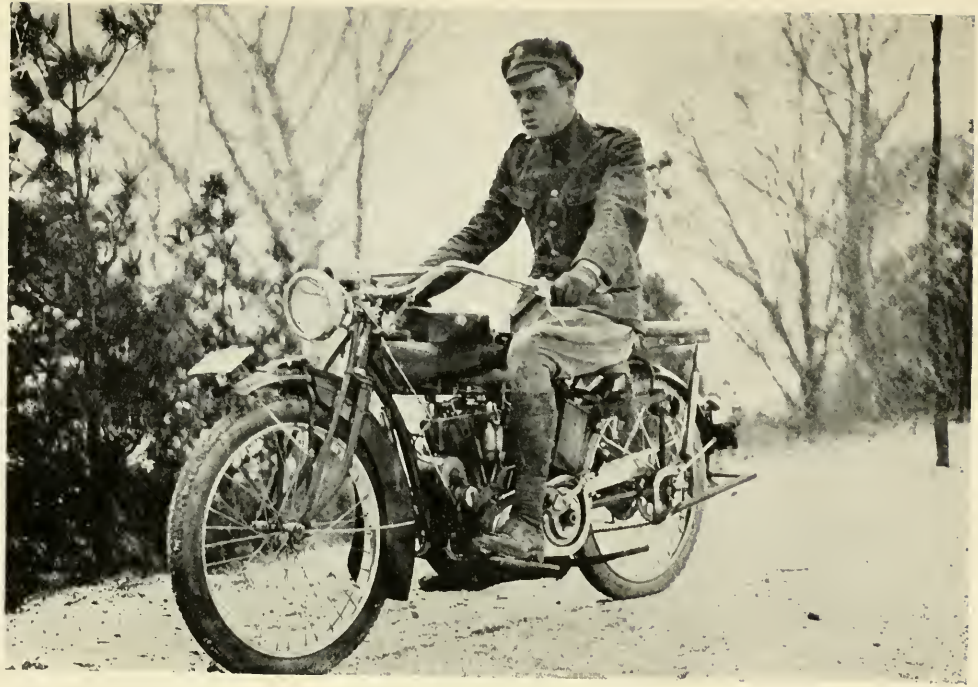
It was about this time that a new driver was found for the General's car, so that left me without any definite work to do. At this time, too, we had the first armored cars in action on our part of the line. They were beautiful machines, sixty-horsepower, mounted with machine guns or three-pounders. While I was waiting to find out what was to become of me I made one trip in this armored car — that is to say, I went into action with it once. Of course the gun was

worked by expert gunners and I was simply acting as spare driver in case anything serious happened. The body of the car is covered with bullet-proof steel, and it is bullet-proof, too.

We didn't get up as far as some of the cars had been, but we got quite far enough to suit me. What with the racket our gun was making and the noise of the bullets bouncing off our armor-plate, it was "no place for a nervous man." The hard part for me was the inactivity, simply sitting there and waiting in case I should be wanted.

We didn't stay there so very long, and I was not sorry for it, either; for, while the bullets only made dents, if a shell had hit us the whole bunch of us would have had jobs "pushing up daisies" in short order. That was my only trip in an armored car, and I'm not particular about having any more, thank you.

I was advised that the only way I could escape being sent back to England to finish



A Dispatch Rider.

my training was to be transferred to the Army Service Corps. This corps, the Royal Engineers, and the Royal Army Medical Corps are the three largest corps in the British Army. When you join the A. S. C. you are never sure just what you will be let in for, because as a rule an A. S. C. man is eligible for general enlistment and that means that he may be used for any branch of the service when he is needed.

My luck had held good so far, and I decided that I might as well push it a little bit more, and so I got transferred. I found that I was to be attached to the staff of the Fifth Army Corps, but, as that corps was not yet in the country, I was used for anything that turned up.

It became known that I could ride a motorcycle, and so I was temporarily attached as a spare rider to Motor Machine Gun Section Number Three. These machines are simply motorcycles with a side-car attached, but instead of a nice cushioned seat on the side-

car, there is a little bucket seat for a gunner and a machine gun. The gunner and rider are entirely in the open, as it would be impossible for so small a machine to carry any protection. I went out on several practice runs, and one night about 11 o'clock we were called to take four of the guns up to the trenches in a hurry.

I thought I had had some thrilling rides in my time, but I never imagined anything to equal that one. We carried no lights and had to fly through the inky blackness, guessing at the road. Several times we got stuck, and my mate and I dragged the machine out of the ditch and flew on again.

Eventually we reached the place on the Menin road known as "hell-fire corner," and I think the name must have been given it from its condition that night. As the star-shells would go up the whole place would be almost as light as day. The Germans were shelling the road and the air was filled with all kinds of missiles.

That road was literally a death trap, and how so many came out without being touched is one of the mysteries that can never be explained. We could hear two of the guns which had got there before us in action further up the road. We continued to feel our way along until we came to where our officer was waiting for us. He showed us our position and went back to look for the machine that had not yet arrived.

Our position was in a ditch just by a place where the road had been cut by an old support trench. We eased the machine into the ditch and got her firmly fixed. Our officer came dashing back and told us to cover the road where it led out from the German trenches. Then it was simply a case of wait until they started to advance from that quarter.

We sat there for over two hours before we saw any signs of activity but when it did come it came with a rush. Hundreds of Germans seemed to rise from nowhere, and that road was literally crammed with them.

Dick, the gunner, opened on them at the first sign, and the machine guns from our trenches were pouring it into them, too. They went down in hundreds and while our fire checked them somewhat, they still came on. It was certainly a despairing feeling to be streaming bullets into the Germans and see them still advance. After several minutes of this the whistles blew for "cease fire" and our infantry jumped the parapet and went after them with the bayonet. They broke the attack right there, and, more than that, they took two lines of German trenches and held them until the next night, when they received orders to retire to their original position. About 5 o'clock we were ordered to go back to headquarters.

A few days after this an incident occurred that, to my way of thinking, was one of the most wonderful things that ever happened. Volunteer dispatch riders for "dangerous work" were called for. About eighteen of our chaps offered themselves, and of course

all were accepted. A dispatch was to be carried about two miles along the road which follows the bank of the Yser Canal. This road was constantly being swept by German machine gun and rifle fire. The dispatch was to be handed to a French commander who was waiting for it.

The first man was given a copy of the dispatch and he started out with it. This road ran right under the noses of the Germans, and was in full view of their trenches all the way. It was so swept by machine gun and rifle fire that it seemed as if no one could possibly live through a hundred yards of it.

The first man started and was soon out of sight. They waited in vain a certain length of time for a signal that he had arrived and then called "Number Two." These signals are made by heliograph, but, while they are good for this kind of work, the Germans can see the signal as well as we can. "Number Two" started out, but we saw him go down before he had gone a hundred yards.

Then "Number Three" started. It was pitiful to watch those poor chaps. When a man knew that it was his turn next, I could see the poor fellow nervously working on his machine. He'd prime the engine, then he'd open and close the throttle quickly several times — anything, in fact, to keep himself busy. When his number would be called he'd hesitate a second and perhaps flood the carburetor, then he'd take his dispatch and suddenly dash out.

Six of these fellows went down in less than half an hour. "Number Seven" was a young fellow whose name I don't know. I wish I did, for he was certainly the nerviest man I ever saw. "Number Seven" was hardly out of the officer's mouth before he had his dispatch and was on his way. About five minutes later the signal came that the dispatch had been delivered.

My officer told me afterward that the French General to whom he had handed the dispatch had taken the Medaille Mili-

On the Way Back to the Front.

taire off his own breast and pinned it on that of this young dispatch rider. He was also later awarded the Victoria Cross and given a commission. It is things like this that make one proud to belong to such an Army.

Soon after this I received orders to proceed by automobile to Aire and wait for orders there. Aire was at that time the headquarters of the Indian contingent, and I was awfully anxious to see the Indians in action. After two days' waiting there I got orders to go to Boescheppe and report myself for duty to Lieut. McNulty. Boescheppe was not far away, so I started at once and arrived before dark. I found Lieut. McNulty without any trouble, and he told me to report to him again the next morning, as he would not want me again that day.

I found a café where there was room for me, and I made myself comfortable. The place was full of Indian troops and I was very much interested in them, as they were the first I had seen in France.

That night I went around the village to see all there was to be seen, and unintentionally I stayed out after 8 o'clock. As I was making my way back to my billet I was walking along the middle of the road whistling. It was as dark as pitch and I couldn't see a yard in front of me. Suddenly I bumped into something, and quicker than a flash two hands closed around my throat. My mouth just naturally opened wide and I yelled "Friend" the loudest I ever yelled in my life.

Then a light shone in my face and I saw it was a great big Sikh on sentry-go. As soon as he saw my uniform it was all right, but I was shivering for half an hour, and I vowed I'd never go prowling around at night again as long as I remained within the Indian lines.

The Indians are the most religious people I ever saw; they seem to live only for their religion, and all their actions are governed by it. Their belief in warfare is to ask no

quarter and to give none. They will fight until the last gasp, for their religion teaches them that to die on the field of battle is to assure themselves of all kinds of luxuries and wealth after death.

The Ghurkas pray to their "kurris", the most murderous looking knife I ever saw. They never draw that knife without they spill blood, and if you want to see one of the weapons you must let them cut your finger before you may look at it. These Ghurkas are supposed to be the best fighters of any of the Indian troops, and in recognition of this fact their pay is just one half-penny a day less than that of the white soldier.

The Sikh places caste above everything. He will not drink from anything that has been used by a white man, for if he did he would lose caste. If he happens to be eating and a white man passes so that the white man's shadow falls across the Sikh's food he will starve rather than touch it again. An Indian soldier must salute all officers, but a

white soldier need not salute an Indian officer. It is the way, however, in which the British Government deals with the Indians that makes them so loyal to her.

The Indians get along very well with the French people, and some of them can even talk a little broken French. The suffering among the Indians during last winter was terrible, but they bore it all fairly cheerfully, and did their duty well. They are not trench fighters, though, and cannot play the waiting game. They want to get out and at the enemy, and the officers have their work cut out to keep them in the trenches for very long. I believe that it is for this reason, together with the difference in climatic conditions, that the Indian troops have been withdrawn from the Western front.

The Germans certainly did not like the Indians a little bit. The Indian's belief regarding no quarter is not especially nice to think about, and their natural instincts are hard to control. I believe there have

been cases where the Indians have butchered whole squads of prisoners. They have a weakness for cutting off ears and heads and keeping other little souvenirs. The Germans know this and naturally it puts the fear of God in them.

CHAPTER III

CHRISTMAS IN THE TRENCHES

I SPENT Christmas Day of 1914 in the trenches just south of Ypres. Christmas eve was a beautiful night, and the Germans who held the trenches opposite us left us very much alone the entire evening. We didn't bother them, either. There was a beautiful moon and, with everything so quiet and peaceful, it was hard to realize that there was a war on. During the evening the Germans started singing, and I heard some of the most beautiful music I ever listened to in my life. The song might start just opposite us, and it would be taken up all along the line, and soon it would seem as if all the Germans in Belgium were singing. When they had finished we would applaud with all our might, and then we would give them a song in return.

A regiment in trenches started "My Old Kentucky Home." The men were getting well along with it, when someone in the German trenches joined in singing in just as good English as any of us could speak. It was beautiful, but it made me awfully homesick. After they had finished, the same German voice sang "Dancing Around," and believe me that fellow could sing ragtime. He was applauded uproariously, and then we sang some more popular songs for them, and so it went until the wee small hours of the morning.

During the night a couple of our chaps crawled up almost to the German parapet, and with them they took a phonograph and a record. They wound up the machine, put on the record and attached a piece of string to the starting lever. Then they crawled back, unwinding the string as they came. The next morning they pulled the string and it started the machine playing that song which was so popular in England

at that time, "When We Wind up the Watch on the Rhine." You can bet that that phonograph was filled full of lead in short order.

It was on Christmas morning, too, that the French on our left made a charge that was very disastrous to them. Things had been so very quiet that I guess they were hoping to surprise the Germans. If that was their intention they were sadly disappointed, for they got caught in a cross fire, and were nearly all wiped out. Some of them, in the middle of field, were in such a position that the Germans were on three sides of them. Although there was a big haystack in the center of this field it offered practically no protection at all. One warm day last April I was crossing this field, and as I approached the haystack I sensed a most fearful smell. I wondered what it was and as I got closer I saw the bodies of about eighteen or twenty of these poor fellows who had been overlooked. The corpses were badly decomposed and were giving off this terrible odor. I lost

no time in getting away from there, and when I returned to camp I reported the matter to headquarters.

During the few weeks directly after Christmas, 1914, I was in the trenches just south of Ypres most of the time. When on duty only in the daytime it was not so bad, but the nights were awful. The Germans had the advantage over us here, in that their trenches were on higher ground, and they drained all the water down into our own. We had only buckets to bail with and it was very slow work, as well as dangerous. Then, too, the cold weather increased our troubles.

I notice in my diary, which I kept from time to time, I have entered an incident which shows our pitiful state. I will quote you just what I wrote over a year ago:

"Dec. 27, 1914. — Was talking with two boys of the Royal Scots today. They have just come down from the Hollebeke trenches, and they are in terrible condition. Their casualties during the last engagement were

light, as they only lost four killed and nineteen wounded, but forty-two died from exposure.

One poor devil tells me that he has three brothers and fifteen cousins in his battalion. Two of his brothers died during the past two weeks. One stopped a bullet, but the other one drowned right by his side in the trenches and he was unable to aid him.

Most of the Royal Scots are suffering from "trench feet." Their feet have swollen to such an extent that they have burst their boots and are as big as a man's head. They are all blue and the blood runs through the pores of the skin, apparently.

A lot came in on their hands and knees, and many came dragging themselves on their bellies through the mud. It was terrible."

One of the saddest things I have ever seen is the last roll call of a regiment which has been all cut to pieces. I saw one regiment go into action for the first time. I watched them go up singing and shouting, and in high spirits

generally. There were over eleven hundred strong going into action, but two days later they came out, and there were only twenty-three of them to answer the last roll call. It is a heart-breaking sight, and one that is impossible to forget. When one thinks of the vast number of men put out of action every day, the system of informing relatives as to what has happened to their dear ones is really wonderful. Mistakes occur frequently of course, but as a rule one is pretty sure to know just what has happened to their relatives. My name has appeared in the casualty lists three times, but the mistake has always been discovered before my people were officially notified.

The trenches are lined with wood and straw, and, as everyone knows, there is nothing which breeds vermin more quickly than straw. I have come down after spending a couple of days in the trenches, and have been in such terrible condition that the lice have been crawling out of the lace holes in my riding

boots. At first it was terrible, but I must admit that after a few experiences of this kind the horror of it wore off, and we took it all pretty much as a matter of course.

When one comes down from the trenches after a stay of any duration, he goes straight to the Divisional Baths and Laundry. Here he is stripped of everything, treated in such a way as to get rid of the vermin, given a hot shower bath, and then fitted out with nice clean clothes again. This system works very well, so that a fellow need not suffer from the vermin when off duty. While in the trenches, though, there is no help for it, and officers and men alike stand these things with the same fortitude that they do the other hardships.

It is rather surprising how such things as this are affecting the British Army. Every one is becoming more and more democratic every day. It is no uncommon sight to see a titled officer sitting on an empty biscuit tin by one of the braziers, smoking a pipe and chatting with the "Tommies." It is

really a fine thing for all concerned, and it makes the men fairly worship their officers and helps the officers appreciate their men. Of course there are officers who have not come to this sort of thing yet, as it is entirely foreign to their ideas of discipline, but every day is showing that officers can be democratic without allowing the men to become familiar, and the results justify the encouragement of these democratic relations.

One day I went to some trenches our division had just taken over. The water was above our knees, and there was also about a foot of soft mud. In feeling around for a firmer foothold, my foot struck something more solid than the ground around me. I started stamping and kicking about, but I couldn't seem to make it give way. Being curious, one of my comrades and I dug down with entrenching tools. What we unearthed was the body of a dead Frenchman. Heaven only knows how long he had been there, but he was as black as a derby hat, and very much

swollen. Such cases as this are not at all out of the ordinary.

In these particular trenches one was fairly safe; the Germans were so close that their artillery did not dare to shell us in the fire line, as they would do their own first line about as much damage as they would us. It was the support trenches that caught all the shell-fire, and had it not been for the water we would have been fairly comfortable.

CHAPTER IV

SNIPERS SNIPPED

AT this time the Dickebusch-Hollebeke road was alive with snipers. In some way they would get through our lines, and secrete themselves along the road where they could pick off individuals without much fear of being seen. I noticed that there was one place in particular where we always heard a bullet pass too close to be comfortable. It was a little wooden bridge, and I don't think I ever crossed it without hearing one whine past me.

One day I rode up with a second lieutenant of the Royal Engineers. As we crossed the bridge a bullet whizzed between us, but when I looked at the officer he did not appear to have noticed it, so I didn't say anything. About three hours later we were coming

back the same way. Just before we came to the bridge he said:

"That blasted sniper has potted at me once too often. We'll leave the road here and sneak down opposite that bridge under cover of the trees. Let us see if we can find the blighter. We'll wait until he pots at somebody else, and you keep your ears stretched and try to locate where the report comes from."

We tethered our horses to a tree, and crept down to a point just about opposite the bridge. After a few minutes an empty transport wagon came along. As this hit the bridge I distinctly heard the crack of a rifle, but it came from behind and to the right of us. We heard the bullet sing over our heads, and saw the driver duck and put the whip to his horses.

Very quietly we crawled back in the direction from which the report had come. After going about one hundred yards we lay still and waited. Pretty soon we heard the rifle crack again, and it wasn't very far away,

but was still behind us. We went a little farther, and the lieutenant whispered, "Keep your eyes skinned. Watch the trees."

I could see no sign of life anywhere, but I knew that the sniper must be very close. After several minutes' wait the report came again, and this time it was so close that I jumped. We heard the ejector fly back and the bolt snapped home again. And then I saw him!

The sniper was well up in a tree, and he was almost invisible, so well was a screen of branches drawn up around him. His rifle was fitted up on a tripod, and the legs of this tripod were nailed to the branches of the tree. All he had to do was to sit there and pull the trigger. I eased back the bolt of my rifle so as to make no noise, and I eased it home again. The lieutenant drew his revolver and we took a steady aim together.

"Fire," he said softly, and the two shots rang out as one. Mr. Sniper came down like a thousand of brick.

I climbed the tree to have a look at his nest, and it certainly was ingenious. That rifle was fixed dead across the center of the bridge, so all he had to do was to pull the trigger when he heard anything strike the wooden planking of the bridge. It was a pretty little scheme, but it came to an end, as all things, good or bad, must.

Other traps such as this were all too common along this road, but eventually we cleared the most of them out. Many of the snipers would wear civilian clothes, some would be wearing the British uniform and some would have the nerve to use their own uniforms. We captured some of these beauties alive. Their admissions were almost unbelievable. They confessed to having patrolled the road every night and actually greeted any of our chaps they chanced to pass. They knew the names of most of the regiments in that vicinity, and some of them even knew the nicknames our fellows had for their officers. It is a job that requires

heaps of nerve, but it is a dirty, despicable game.

I heard a story which was rather gruesome, but which appealed to the warped sense of humor of the perpetrators. A German sniper was killed one night, and the fellows who brought him down decided to play a joke on an Irishman in their regiment. They took the body of the sniper and carried it about a hundred yards off the road, where they propped it up against a tree, and also fixed a rifle to its shoulder. Then they went in search of the Irishman. When they found him they told him that he had been ordered to go up the road and hunt for a sniper who was potting at the passing traffic.

The Irishman took his rifle and went out in search of the German. Of course he found him, for he couldn't have passed without seeing the trap which had been laid for him. The minute he caught sight of the gray uniform he dropped behind a bale of hay which was lying on the side of the road, and

started firing at the supposed sniper. The fellows who had sent him up there came along, and, without being observed by the object of their joke, proceeded to enjoy the fun. The Irishman couldn't understand how it was possible for him to miss his mark at such a short range, and at each shot he was cursing and swearing at his luck. Finally he hit the body so many times that it fell over, and it was not until then that he realized how he had been fooled.

Another sniping incident that happened long after, but which I will tell of here, was the case of a Belgian boy only fourteen years old. On a road which was much used for transport, we noticed that nearly every night some of our officers would be shot. This went on for some time, and no one could explain it. One day one of our fellows brought in this kid, and said that he had found him with a German rifle and ammunition in his possession.

The boy was cross-examined and finally

admitted that it was he who had been shooting officers on the Ouderdom road. He said that he had been furnished with the rifle, and told where he got his ammunition each day. He said he had instructions not to shoot any officers with red on their uniform (staff officers). Now why he should have received such an order as this was a mystery to me.

He said that he had been at it for over two weeks, and during that time he had bagged sixteen officers. He said he received six francs (about $1.20) for every officer he shot. He was taken to the rear and shot at once. We tried to follow up the information he had given as to where he had received his ammunition, but his friends had all gone, though, so I suppose they had been warned.

About this time, too, we caught an old man eighty-two years old. In broad daylight he was out with a pair of nippers cutting our wires. We caught men dressed as women, and women dressed as men. We caught people flying pigeons from their houses; in

fact, we caught spies doing almost everything to give information.

We were always busy trying to make the trenches we had taken over from the French a little more comfortable. We made wooden gratings for the bottom of them, besides the lookout platform; from empty oil drums we made braziers, and these in particular were mighty agreeable at night.

The country for a couple of miles back of the trenches was deserted. The people had fled, leaving practically everything. Chickens and pigs were running wild, and it is surprising how quickly they will get almost as wild as the wildest animals. A pig hunt with fixed bayonets is a very amusing thing to watch. Get about twenty fellows after a pig and they have their work cut out for them. The pig gives them a good run for their money, but in the end they generally get him, and then comes the march back to camp with the pig held aloft on the ends of several bayonets.

Chicken fishing is great fun, too, but it

requires an awful lot of patience. You take a long piece of string and tie a little piece of bread to the end of it. Then you find a spot where there are chickens about. Scatter some crumbs around and also drop the piece of bread you have on the end of the string. Then you find a convenient tree and sit down with the other end of the string in your hand and wait for the chickens to "bite." When one comes to your piece of bread you begin jerking it nearer to the tree behind which you are hiding. When he comes within striking distance, you jump as if you were falling on a football, and if you are lucky you will have chicken for dinner.

I was out one day in a motor with a staff captain and Dave Smith, the heavy-weight champion whom I bumped against during my first days in the army. We had been up to a brigade headquarters, and were on return trip. I had taken a shorter way coming back, and it was along a very narrow road. Dave was sitting in the front with me and the

captain was in the tonneau. We were bowling along at a fairly good pace, and I had visions of being back in time for dinner.

I noticed a few cavalrymen away ahead of us, but they were so far ahead I didn't pay much attention to them. The first that I knew we were striking anything out of the ordinary was when Dave grabbed my rifle out of the bucket and began firing over the windshield. Then I took another look and saw the cavalrymen were Germans, and there were seven of them.

The road was so narrow that there wasn't a ghost of a chance to turn around, and I figured that if we rushed them we could bluff our way through, whereas, if we stopped they would see that they outnumbered us two to one, and the chances were we would get the worst of it. I was so excited I was trembling all over, and the captain was shouting orders at me at the top of his voice.

Dave was the only cool man in the car, and he was sending shot after shot at them

as calmly as if he were on a rifle range. He shouted to me, "Go like hell. Crowd 'em off the road."

When they saw how we were gaining on them, six of them left the road and hit out across country. I thought Dave must have hit the other fellow, for he simply put the spurs to his horse and stuck right to the middle of the road. He didn't attempt to fire at us at all, he was just going for all he was worth.

When I saw this I started after him in earnest, and he didn't have a chance in the world. That car I had then did seventy-eight miles an hour on her test, and I hardly gave German horses credit for such speed as that. As we got closer to him Dave quit firing, for it would have been murder to shoot a man in a trap such as he was in. He kept to the center of the road, though, and he wouldn't give an inch.

I was blowing that old siren for all it was worth, and I opened the cut-out to make

all the noise I could, trying to scare his horse off the road, and the animal wanted to get out of the way, too, but the rider held him in.

At last Dave said, "I'll make him move," and he sent a bullet so close I'll bet he could have kissed it as it went by. He gave way then all right, and as he did I pulled up alongside of him. As we came up he pulled a revolver and fired two shots, which just went over my head. Dave leaned over and caught him by the belt. He yanked him clear of the saddle and slung him into the back of the car. He landed on top of the captain, and those two were so mixed up you couldn't tell one from the other.

I stopped the car as quickly as I could, and we soon had him "saying Uncle", though he fought like a wildcat for a few minutes. The captain got the worst of it, for he had a beautiful "shiner" and the skin off his knuckles. When we searched him we found thirty-three English ten shilling notes on him. He had taken them from some of our

fellows, of course, but what made us mad was that the captain would not allow us to keep them.

He said it would not be honest, but I noticed that when we handed him over to some French cavalry a little later, they didn't hesitate about taking them, and Dave and I sat in the car and watched them splitting it among themselves. I felt rather sorry for the poor devil, for he said that he and the rest of his squad had been hiding for five days and five nights and that they didn't know where they were. They had become desperate and decided to run for it in the open. The other six came in and surrendered later in the day.

CHAPTER V

SUPPLIES FOR AN ARMY

THE organization that enables us to get our supplies is remarkable. These supplies are brought across the Channel daily. The railway lines run right down to the docks, so the goods are put on the trains as they are taken out of the ship. Each division, army corps, and army has its own railhead, or, in other words, each one of these units has its own station to which its supplies are delivered. Every unit has its own Supply Column which is made up of any number of motor trucks, the total varying according to the strength of the unit. These motor trucks pull up on each side of the train, and the supplies are shifted from the train to the motors in a very short space of time.

Each motor truck is loaded with only one kind of goods, and as the column leaves the station yard, all vehicles carrying the same kind of goods group themselves together, so that when they finally move off, ten trucks of meat may be leading the column followed by various numbers of truck loads of bread, groceries, clothing, hay and grain, petrol and mechanical supplies. In this way the goods are all dumped together, and they practically form separate little stores for each article.

The "first dump", as it is called, is a place cleared away on the side of the road where the men may deposit the supplies so that it will be convenient for the horse transport to come and get them. Here the goods are unloaded, and the motor column returns to the headquarters. After it is dark the horse transport come down from the trenches, load their wagons, and immediately return to the trenches, where the supplies are issued to each unit for distribution to the smaller units. The motors complete their work in

an incredibly short time. They have seven or eight miles to carry their loads, and in some cases even further, yet within two or three hours from the time they leave their camps in the morning, they are back again, and the army has been provided for for another day.

To each motor vehicle three men are assigned. They are known as the first, second, and third drivers, and are all of them qualified chauffeurs. In case anything happens to the first driver the others are there to take his place. The first driver has the care of the engine and the driving of the truck, while the other two men have the greasing and oiling, the cleaning of the vehicle, and they also assist in the loading and unloading of the supplies. The motors are inspected daily, and if not in perfect running order, they are at once taken care of by the column workshops. These workshops are very efficient, and it is remarkable what thorough work they can turn out. They are each fitted

with a lathe, forge, benches, etc., the lathe being run by a small motorcycle engine provided for that purpose. If for any reason the column is unable to repair a motor, that vehicle is at once sent to one of the bases where there are stationary workshops, and a new truck is sent back to replace it. The mechanics in these workshops are all trained men, and are obliged to pass severe tests before being accepted for the work. Many of them are men who have worked on the building of cars in the factories in England, and in cases like this, they are allowed to specialize on the cars they are familiar with. The only other mechanics who can claim to be their superiors are those of the Royal Flying Corps, and they are absolutely the cream of the mechanical world, and are one of the highest paid bodies of men in the British Army.

Another branch of the Mechanical Transport which is very much up to date is the Department of Stores and Accessories. The

men in this department are not necessarily trained men, but they must be good managers, as they keep in stock all spare parts which are likely to be called for. Besides this they have charge of the petrol, oil, grease, carbide, tires for light cars, and in fact everything that is likely to be used on an automobile. The petrol is all sent from England in two-gallon tins. These tins are sealed when they are filled, and if a seal is broken when a tin of petrol is issued to a driver, or if it appears to have been opened, he may refuse it and demand one with the seal intact. In this way the chance of receiving defective or impure petrol is avoided.

There are practically all known makes of motor trucks and cars at the front, as many of them were commandeered at the beginning of the war. Then again, all the motor manufacturers in England are working day and night to keep the armies supplied with these vehicles. There are also a good many American makes in use there. I think there are

more Peerless trucks in the British Army than any other American make of car. As I understand it, the reason for this is that there were several ship loads of these trucks bought by the German Government, but they were captured by the English while en route for Germany.

The work of the chaplains at the front is not spoken of very much, yet they work as hard and do as much good as any man in any other branch of the service. They are usually attached to the Royal Army Medical Corps, as they have a better chance to work among the sick and wounded there than they would in any other branch of the service. I have seen a chaplain holding service in a field on a Sunday morning, and during the service the enemy commenced to shell some huts close by. I firmly believe that if it had not been contrary to orders, he would have continued to worship just the same as though nothing was happening.

The Royal Army Medical Corps is a

tremendous unit, and here, too, will be found some of the bravest men in the army even though they are non-combatants. This Corps is always referred to as the R. A. M. C., and the British "Tommy" speaks of it as the "Rob All My Comrades." There is a reason for this, of course, and as near as I can make out it is this: When a man is sick or wounded, and is obliged to go into hospital, all his belongings are taken from him. He is supposed to get them all back when he is discharged from hospital, but when one considers the thousands that are taken care of by the hospitals, it is only reasonable to believe that a great many of the little bundles are bound to go astray. Tommy cannot see this, however, so he grumbles and growls a little, and often refers to the corps in uncomplimentary terms. The nurses in the hospitals are worshipped and adored by the soldiers and surely this is as it should be, for they are suffering almost as much as the men, and yet they keep cheerful and supply the

tender womanly sympathy which means so much when in physical anguish. They are a wonderful body of women, and their work is appreciated. Some of them are close enough to the front to be under fire, and they are as brave as the men when it comes to facing danger.

During an aeroplane raid last fall I had a chance to watch some of the nurses. We had about thirty German aeroplanes over our encampment dropping bombs. As they went back to their own lines, they flew over a hospital located in an open field. There were huge red crosses painted on the top of every tent, so it would seem that any mistake as to the nature of the camp would be impossible. Nevertheless as the taubes passed over they dropped several bombs in the hospital, and killed quite a number of the poor chaps who were already wounded. The nurses worked as hard as they could trying to quiet the rest of the men, and it is no easy task, for while a soldier may face almost

anything when he is well, it is a very different matter when he is lying helpless, wounded and in pain on a stretcher.

I was very much interested to learn how a man's mail was taken care of when anything had happened to him. It seemed to me that the chance of his letters being returned before his people could be notified was very great. On asking about this I find that when a man has been killed his letters are marked "Killed", but instead of being sent directly to his people they are returned to the War Office, and are sent from there, after the casualty has been made known, to his relatives. In this way many people are saved a great deal of premature worry and uneasiness.

I shall never forget the time I saw the Royal Horse Artillery go into action, for a more thrilling sight would be hard to imagine. I was out alone in the car, and I had been doing patrol duty. I went rather closer to our firing line than I intended to, but decided to push on until I struck the "route Nation-

ale", so I would have a good road all the rest of the way back to camp.

I had to go through the village of Dickebusch, and, as I came to the crossroads just outside the village, a sentry stopped me and said I could not go on. It seems that some Germans had got a machine gun in the steeple of the church, and were cleaning up everything that tried to pass. The horse artillery had been sent for, and I learned that they were on their way even then.

I decided to wait around and see what happened, so I pulled in to the side of the road. I had hardly stopped when I heard a rush and rattle that sounded like an old flivver in the distance. Around the curve dashed eight horses on the dead gallop, pulling an eighteen-pounder behind them. They dashed by, but about fifty yards ahead of me they swung around and trained that gun on the church.

There was a moment's pause and then she spoke, and away went steeple, Germans,

machine gun and all. The first shot had been a direct hit, and it couldn't have been better if they had tried a thousand years.

It was the very next day after this event that I got into as tight a fix as I ever care to find myself. I was ordered to take three officers to a place called Kemmel. I had been there before, and from what I had seen then I wasn't eager about making the trip again. But one of the first lessons I had learned was that in the army you do what you are told to do, and if you don't like it, do it anyway.

We started off about 1 o'clock and expected to be back by five. I noticed as I came to the Kemmel road that there were two sentries on duty there, but as they only saluted the officers and didn't say anything I thought no more about it. Now Kemmel lies at the foot of a hill and is tucked in between Mt. Noir and Mt. Kemmel. It would be a cozy little place in peace time, but it is an awful trap to get caught in when there is a war on.

I sent the car up the hill as fast as she could go, and it is a long climb. As we went over the brow and started on the down grade we ran right under the noses of the German artillery observers. This road was officially closed and those sentries should have stopped us.

Well, it scared me so that I went down that hill so fast those officers must have thought they were in a parachute. As we entered the village the shells commenced to drop in on us and we ran for the nearest shelter, which happened to be a brewery.

There wasn't much left of the place, anyway, as it had been in German hands, and we had shelled them out of it, and when we had taken it they had shelled us out of it. Anyway, we left the car and crawled into the cellar. It was wet and filthy, but it looked just like Heaven to me that day.

We lay there in all this filth hour after hour, while the shells literally poured in all around us. They certainly wasted a lot of

good ammunition trying to get us, but the best of it was that they didn't succeed. One of the officers remarked, during a moment's silence, that the Crown Prince of Germany must have made his headquarters in the place when it was in German hands. Another officer replied that he wished the Crown Prince was there now.

We lay there till the fire let up, which it did about 5 o'clock. I was worrying about getting back, and I was also wondering what had become of the car. If it was gone we might just as well kiss ourselves goodby, for our chances of getting out on foot would be slim.

When the fire had abated we came out and looked around. The enemy certainly had made a mess of the place, for even the top story of the brewery had been shot away from over our heads. I went to look the car over, and you can just believe I was relieved to find that, aside from having a few holes through the body, it was all right.

The officers decided to wait until it was dark before chancing the run back past those "*Boches*" as the French call the Germans. I didn't know what was going to happen to us. I wasn't very familiar with the road, and I was afraid they would have some kind of a barricade up, or have a few machine guns trained on us or something equally unpleasant.

I certainly was dreading that ride back, but there was no other way out, and we were between the devil and the deep sea. It was at a time like this that I wished that I had never seen the British Army. I turned the car around, and as soon as it was dark we got in and started. I opened her up wide, and by the time we got to the bottom of the hill we were doing about fifty miles an hour, and I couldn't see very much either, for, of course, I did not use any lights.

I didn't know what was waiting for us at the top of the hill, but I did know that if there was anything there we were going right

through it, even if we didn't go any farther. The ridiculous part of it was that we went right through and never saw a thing. Absolutely nothing happened, but I don't ever want to feel again the way I felt coming up that hill.

Shortly after this I learned that the British Tommy is a great gambler and will gamble with, on, or for anything. Trench pools used to be very popular. About ten fellows got together and each put ten francs in a pool just before they went into action. They left this money with someone behind the lines, for they would be in action anywhere from six days to three weeks.

The idea of the pool was this: Those who lived to get back would take the money and split it evenly among themselves. If only one lived he would have the whole lot. Sometimes the pools would be fairly big, and sometimes the reverse, but whatever they had went in. It is the only gamble I ever saw where you couldn't lose. If you came out

safely, you were bound to get your own money back, at least.

The Tommies are strong for carrying pets with them, too. They keep canaries, rats, mice, dogs, cats, goats, and even pigs, and they will go hungry themselves rather than see the object of their affections want for anything. On the march if they get tired they may throw their equipment away, but I never heard of one yet who would give up his mascot.

CHAPTER VI

DROPPING BOMBS FROM AIRCRAFT

DURING that winter there was a lot of talk about the "Mad Major." He was an artillery officer who was just about the biggest daredevil I heard of. He kept an aeroplane himself, and if he wanted to correct a range he would go himself and drop smoke bombs over the point he wanted to get. He was absolutely fearless and would fly so low that they would be potting at him with revolvers, but it didn't seem to bother him at all.

I have heard that he did more damage with his battery than a whole brigade of ordinary artillery could under ordinary conditions. I don't know what became of him in the end, but the last of his stunts that I heard about was this: There was a big

seventeen-inch howitzer doing us an awful lot of damage. It was out of range of our guns and we were much put about as to how to get it out of action.

The "Mad Major" went out alone in his aeroplane and took with him just one bomb, a one-hundred-pounder. He located the gun he wanted while flying at an altitude of over three thousand feet. He got right over the position and stopped his engine. He then did a nose dive to within four hundred feet of the gun. Then he dropped his bomb and blew the thing to atoms. He got back safely, but the planes of his machine were riddled with bullets!

Soon after this we were on the move, and as it happened we went from bad to worse. The first day we entered a little place that was unoccupied by troops, and we decided to spend the night there. The Germans must have heard of our arrival promptly, for before we had been there an hour shells began to drop in on us.

The officer I was driving was with me at the time the first one burst. It landed in the backyard of the house we were in, and the force of the explosion sent us all in a heap on the floor. The officer decided that we would get out of the place, and find some nice quiet spot to spend the night. We left at once and went about five miles down the road until we came to a field ambulance. We found that they had some spare stretchers, so we decided to stay there. The officer's servant carried stretchers in for all of us, and after having something to eat we went right to sleep, as we were tired out.

I don't believe we had been asleep more than an hour when a shell landed in that field ambulance! It tore through the roof and burst in the room next to us, killing and wounding eighteen men who had already been wounded once. I got up in a hurry, but found that the officer was before me, and when I reached the car I found that he was making himself comfortable in the tonneau.

I took my waterproof sheet and my blankets and I made myself a bed on the cobblestones under the car. I slept like a log until it began to rain, and then I got up in disgust and sat up the rest of the night in the driving seat.

The next day we stopped in a little village called Pradelles, the place where the Germans had stood the priest up against the wall of his own church and shot him because he couldn't give them the information they wanted.

Across from this church was a little "estaminet" where I went to buy a bottle of wine to have with my dinner. You can imagine my surprise when the French woman in charge called me an "English pig", and said that she would sell nothing to the English. I told her what I thought of her and she told me what she thought of me.

She said the English were thieves, murderers, and other nice things, and informed me also that the only true gentlemen in the

world were the Prussians. She certainly had me aroused, and I was going to arrest everyone I could find in the house, until her daughter came in.

She saw at once how things were, and led the old lady upstairs and then explained that the Germans had taken her two youngest sisters away, and that since that time her mother had been insane. It is pitiful to see some of these poor people who have been driven insane by their experiences and their grief.

It was outside Pradelles that we ran into the Germans and had a long-distance scrap. We were not strong and didn't know how strong they were, so we were not pressing them very hard until some reinforcements came up. I think they were in the same position as we were, for they didn't try to get to close quarters at all. So we kept at it all afternoon, until at night the Germans retired, and we camped a little further on and waited for our main body to come up. Our casualties

numbered only about twenty dead, and we buried them in the churchyard before we left.

I passed through Pradelles about two months later, and I went into the churchyard where these chaps are buried. The people of the village have set little white crosses at the head of each grave. On each cross is the name, number and regiment of the soldier lying below, and under that is "Mort de la Champ d'Honneur." It was a most thoughtful thing for those poor peasants to do.

It was in a village called Outrasteene, quite near Pradelles, that I first saw the Prince of Wales. He was with Sir John French, and they were reviewing a brigade that hadn't been in the country very long. He is a nice looking fellow, but very boyish in appearance. He doesn't seem to be more than sixteen or seventeen. He is liked by the men, and quite often will go and sit among them and talk to them.

Soon after this I received orders to prepare for a two-day journey in the car. I didn't know where I was to go until the night before I was to start, and then I was told that I was to go to Paris to get an officer who was waiting for me there. Of course I was delighted, for I hadn't been in any large city for a long time.

Paris is over two hundred miles from where we were then, and my orders were to make it in one day. While it was a long journey, I felt that it would be well worth it, so I set out with a light heart. I had never been over the road before, but with the maps we are given it is not hard to find the way anywhere. At Lillers I hit the main Paris road and it was glorious. There is no speed limit for a dispatch car, and you bet I was flying my blue and white flag that day. Straight down through St. Venant, St. Pol, Doullens and Amiens I flew and about 6 : 30 I came to the outskirts of Paris. I was surprised on entering the capital to find so few British

soldiers. I knew that we had several permanent bases in the vicinity and I expected to find the place swarming with Tommies.

I soon found the reason for Tommy's absence, for, as soon as I left the car and started out on foot, I was continually being stopped and asked who I was, what I was, where did I come from, what was I doing and what was I going to do. Being on special duty, I had a pass in my possession which bore the French stamp as well as the British. This pass would take me anywhere in France or Belgium, and a flash of it, coupled with the words "special duty", permitted me to go where I pleased. Had I been without it I would have been arrested about every ten minutes.

The defenses in Paris against hostile aircraft attack were a revelation to me. I never saw anything more thorough in my life. Any of the more venturesome Germans who care to make an attempt against Paris are in for a hot reception.

The city itself is very quiet. One misses the bustle and excitement of present-day London, but there is a feeling of subdued activity in the atmosphere which leaves the impression that big things are going on all around. The big hotels which cater to the foreign tourist are all closed, as are many of the big stores, and some of the theaters. In fact, the Paris that one sees now is the real Paris, and not the gathering place for the pleasure-seekers of the world.

One notices the absence of the young men more than anywhere else in France, business being carried on by the older men and those who are unfit for military service. On the whole, the people seem to be cheerful, but they take the war very much in earnest, and are determined to fight the thing through to the bitter end.

Two days after my arrival the officer whom I was to take back to the front said he was ready to start and for me to prepare the car for the return journey on the morrow. The

ride back was uneventful, but when we arrived we found that the headquarters were going to be moved north across the Belgian frontier the next day. We were to take over the job of holding the town of Poperinghe, which the French had been occupying. We were then taking over more front than we had been holding previously.

At this time the roads were in terrible condition. They are made of cobblestones in the middle, but either side is nothing but mud, so after a few days' rain, if one slips off the stones, he finds himself in a regular quagmire, and will sink in over the axle. We took Poperinghe over from the French, and while we were moving in, they were moving out, and the two lines of transport, each going over the same road, resulted in some fine mix-ups.

Eventually we arrived all right and found that this place was much better than Hazebrouck which we had left. Hazebrouck was the junction of seven railroad lines and consequently a popular target for German aircraft.

There was every facility for quartering the men and horses, good offices for the staff, and we were much nearer the firing line at Poperinghe. In my car I have made the run from our trenches to Poperinghe in less than twenty minutes, so you can see that we were not very far behind the actual fighting.

The people in Poperinghe, while they had seen British troops before, had never had them in the town for any length of time, and they seemed to be very glad to see us. We had several Scotch regiments in our Corps, and when they came out of the trenches the first time they created a great sensation in the town. Their kilts were a never-failing source of astonishment to the Belgians. The woman in the house where I was billeted thought that it was cruel to make them wear the "little dresses" in the cold weather. She wanted to know what they wore underneath them, and when I told her that they wore nothing she wouldn't believe me. I explained to her that it was against orders

for them to wear trousers under the kilt, but still she refused to believe.

At this time bomb-throwing was becoming more and more popular, and besides using the hand bombs we were using larger ones, which were thrown by a catapult arrangement. They could be thrown a long distance, and in many cases proved to be very effective. Bomb and grenade schools for every division were opened, and the men were trained to throw bombs scientifically.

In some places we started using the sling-shot arrangement with which the French throw bombs, but it didn't turn out as well for us as it did for them. I saw one case in which the using of one of these things was very disastrous. One of our fellows put a bomb in the sling and started swinging it. As he tried to let it go, the whole thing hit the man standing next to him full in the jaw. Of course, it exploded and killed several men who were standing near, including the fellow who had tried to throw it.

We used two kinds of bombs, the pin bomb with the time fuse, and the percussion bomb. The pin bomb is used mostly for throwing from the trench. To throw this bomb you take it in the throwing hand, draw out the pin with the other hand, count two seconds, and throw it. When the pin is drawn it starts the time-fuse working, and the bomb explodes in four seconds. It is rather ticklish work, and requires a cool head to throw these bombs effectively.

The percussion bomb is used mostly in attacking and explodes only on striking something. If a "bomber" with a belt full of these bombs misses his step and falls, he can kiss himself good-by, for there will be nothing left to pick up. During an attack in the Menin trenches I saw an incident that I will never forget. Our fellows had taken two lines of trenches in a very few minutes. In some places there were Germans occupying a part of a trench while we held the other part.

"Split This Between Ye, Ye Swine!"

Drawn by P. Matani for "The Sphere", London, and copyrighted in the United States by The New York Herald Company.

A big Irishman came dashing up with a second load of bombs, and as he came forward I saw these Germans raise their rifles to fire at him. The Irishman was too quick for them though, for he chucked a bomb into the trench they were in and I heard his yell, "Split that between ye, ye swine!"

It wiped out the whole crowd of them, of course, and the best part of it was that the Irishman didn't alter his stride the least bit. The expression has become quite popular among "bombers."

We hadn't been in Poperinghe many days before German aeroplanes began coming over us. They didn't do any damage at first, and I wondered why they didn't drop any bombs. Every morning about 5 o'clock two or three taubes would appear and fly back and forth for a few minutes and then they would go away and we wouldn't see any more of them until the next morning at the same hour.

At last we got used to them and they didn't bother us at all. Once in a while our guns

would bring one of them to earth, and then there would be one grand rush to the place where the machine had fallen. I saw one fellow fall one morning, and as I had my motorbike I hopped on and dashed down the road to try to find him. He had come to earth safely, but his engine had been put out of commission by a piece of shrapnel. He had set fire to the machine, and was calmly sitting on the ground some distance from where it was burning.

Some Flying Corps fellows were there just a few seconds ahead of me, and they made him prisoner. As he got to his feet he remarked in perfect English, "I had a presentiment that I wouldn't get back this morning. O, well, *c'est la guerre*, do with me what you will."

However, he was a German; a great many of our enemy could speak the King's language.

We knew that sooner or later these aeroplanes were going to take a good stiff crack at us, and we were expecting it every day.

The first air raid they pulled on Poperinghe came about a month after we had taken the town over. I had a new car and I had been out with it for a trial run. When I got back to Poperinghe I ran into the Grand Place, and stopped right in front of the general billet, where the corps and guards were living. I had the engine still running, and was just sitting in the driving seat listening to it.

It was a cloudy day, and I remember hearing an aeroplane, but I thought it was one of our own, for one of our flying grounds was close by. Suddenly a taube shot down through the clouds, and a second or so later there was a deafening explosion followed by two others in quick succession. The first bomb landed about thirty yards away from where I was, and the pieces of it flew all around me.

An old man was standing right by my car, and he had almost his whole face swept right off by a piece of the bomb. I can never forget my horror at the pitiful noises

which came from this shapeless, bloody mass which had but a moment before been a human face.

A woman with two children had just passed, and another piece of the bomb hit them. The woman was blown right through a window of the Hotel de la Paix, and all that was left of the kiddies was two little bundles of bloody clothes, and a little pair of shoes projecting from each. A man passing on a bicycle had his whole side torn away, and he lay there in the gutter gasping and coughing and the blood just pouring from him. His bicycle was all twisted and bent and was hung over a lamp-post about fifty yards away.

Altogether there were forty-six casualties from that raid; eleven were killed. There was only one British soldier and one French gendarme killed among the military; the remainder were all civilians. A military funeral was given them all, and it was one of the most solemn and impressive ceremonies I

ever witnessed. British soldiers carried our poor chap, and French soldiers carried the Frenchman. The civilians were carried by their own townsmen.

Each coffin was wrapped in the National flag, and escorts and firing parties of each of the three Nations were in attendance. The Belgian "Old Guard", the old veterans, turned out with their band and in dress uniform. During the service in the church, and in fact until the whole funeral was over, three aeroplanes, one Belgian, one French and one English, circled back and forth over the city. The streets were lined with soldiers, all with reversed arms, and the band played the death march all the way to the cemetery.

This was only the first of many raids on us in this town, and many a poor civilian, who had harmed no one, met his death in this way.

If it is still standing, there is, very near the front at Vlamertinghe, not far from Poperinghe, a château, where one of our divisions had their headquarters, the corps head-

quarters being at Poperinghe. It is a beautiful place built on the old style, with enormous grounds and a moat all around it.

While sitting on a table in a room in this château I first heard one of our really big guns fired. I knew that these guns had been placed in the grounds of the château somewhere, but at the time I never thought for a moment what was likely to happen when they went into action. I was talking to one of the fellows about an air raid that we had just pulled off.

Suddenly, and without the slightest warning, came this terrific explosion that lifted me off the table and dumped me halfway across the room. The whole place rocked and every window in the house was broken. We rushed out to see what had happened, and found that one of these guns had just been fired. I mention this merely to show what damage the concussion alone will do.

During the time the divisional headquarters were in this château the strictest

rules were enforced regarding keeping under cover and showing no signs of activity around the place. To look at it from the outside one would never dream that on the inside several Generals and their staffs were working a tremendous fighting machine. No autos, motorbikes, bicycles or horses were allowed within the gates, and when a man went in he had to keep under the trees all the way. At night, while the place was brightly lighted on the inside, not even a glimmer showed from the road. I guess it was about the most quietly conducted headquarters on the whole front.

Vlamertinghe is so close to the firing line that it is only a matter of a couple of minutes before an aeroplane can be right over the place. Of course our corps headquarters at Poperinghe was bigger, but was not so near the front.

After those big guns of ours went into action there it was only a matter of a few days before shells began to drop in on the place. I hap-

pened to be the other side of Vlamertinghe when the bombardment commenced, and I had to run through it on my way back.

As usual, one of the first places to go was the church, and as I passed by I caught a glimpse of the edifice burning and the priests working feverishly trying to save some of the contents. As usual, too, the people were in a panic, and the road was crowded with them. One can't help feeling terribly sorry for them, for they are leaving all they have in the world, and they know that the chances are they will only find a heap of bricks to mark their homes when they return. After the first day Vlamertinghe was shelled every day, and is yet, so far as I know, though now there is scarcely anything left of it to shell, and it is absolutely deserted.

CHAPTER VII

THE COLONEL'S STRANGE MISSION

ONE night I was called and warned for special duty the next day. I hadn't the slightest idea in the world what it would be, but I'll confess that I was surprised when I found out. I was wanted by a colonel who had been sent out from England to find the grave of Prince Maurice of Battenberg. His resting place was thought to be in the Menin churchyard, and I was to guide this colonel up there and was placed at his disposal until the grave was found.

Now the Menin churchyard is never a pleasing proposition and from what I could see it was going to be far from pleasant this time. "Hell-fire corner" is just opposite the church, and a very unhealthy spot. Prince Maurice had been killed near Ypres

while fighting for the English and hurriedly buried in the churchyard, which had been so constantly shelled that it was feared his body had been entirely obliterated. English royalty was anxious to know if his remains were still marked.

We went up to the Porte de Menin, in Ypres, in the car, and decided to leave it there, as it is not advisable to let a car stand very long on the Menin road. As we went up the road I warned the officer to be careful, for there were plenty of snipers about. I did this hoping to make him be careful. He was such an old man he had not been out to the front before in this war, but from the colors he was wearing on his breast I would be willing to wager that this is the first one he hasn't been in for a good many years.

We reached the churchyard without anything exciting happening, but I was not at all fussy about poking around among those graves. The place has been all shelled to pieces and the bodies blown out of the graves.

The smell was awful. After about fifteen minutes' search we found the grave we were looking for by the inscription at the base of a crude monument and marked it so we would be sure to find it again. The body of the Prince will probably be reburied elsewhere in more peaceful times.

When we left the graveyard he asked how far it was to our trenches. I told him that it was less than a mile, but that it was mighty risky business going up in the daytime. When the colonel found that it was such a short distance he wanted to go up and see what they were like. I was under his orders, so there was nothing for me to do but take him there. I spoke of the snipers again, but he didn't seem to care for all the snipers in the German Army, so we started up the road.

We hadn't gone two hundred yards before a bullet pinged by close enough to give a wooden man heart failure. Of course I ducked, and the old man noticed it. You can imagine

how I felt when he said: "If you hear any snipers, you might let me know. I'm getting rather deaf lately."

Well, I admit that I swore.

At last we came to the place where the communication trench begins, and I explained it to him. The trench lies about one hundred yards off the road, running parallel to it. It is awfully muddy and one of the dirtiest holes to get to that I ever saw. He noted this and wanted to stick to the road, so I shut up and said no more for a few minutes.

Pretty soon a few shells began to come over, and I could see them bursting further up the road. I spoke again, and pointed out the danger we were running into. He had to consent then, so we slipped and slid through the mud, and finally got into the trench. It was very easy after that, and we reached the trenches just in time to have some lunch.

In the afternoon he was shown all through

the trenches there, and then he came back and asked to see some bombs thrown. They threw some bombs for him, and then started firing rifle grenades. Everything was lovely until about 4 o'clock. Suddenly something whizzed over and landed in the trench not a dozen feet from where we were standing. I didn't wait to see what it was. I didn't even hesitate. My feet just acted automatically, and I think I broke the world's record for the standing broad jump right then and there. As it happened, the thing didn't explode, and it's a good thing it didn't, for the colonel just stood and watched it.

Soon after this he decided to go back, so we returned the same way we had come, and all the way back he had me picking up shell noses and pieces of shell until, when we reached the car again, I resembled a junk wagon.

To put the finishing touches on it all, they were shelling Vlamertinghe when we returned, and we passed through that place as fast as

that car could travel, while the houses were tumbling down on either side of us. Taken all in all, it was about as exciting a day as I wanted.

But my troubles were not over yet, for I was informed that I was to take him to the Ploogsteert trenches the next day. I did not mind that so much, for the Saxons were holding the trenches opposite us on that part of the line, and they did not bother us very much. Sometimes days will pass with hardly a shot being fired. Of course the German artillery gives it to us just the same as it does everywhere else, but the Saxons themselves are pretty decent chaps.

The village of Ploogsteert is a very interesting place, as there had been a great deal of hand-to-hand fighting there in the earlier days of the war, and the houses and trees which are left standing are all scratched and cut by bullet marks.

We started out about 10 o'clock the next morning, and by eleven we were on our way up

to the trenches. In going to these trenches one passes through a big wood, and this place, too, was alive with snipers. We arrived without mishap, however, but things were warmer than usual, for it seems that there were some Bavarians in against us at this time.

While the colonel was mousing around, I picked up one of the new periscopic rifles that had just come out, and I started potting at a chap who was digging a sniping trench out in front of the German parapet. I could only see the flash of his entrenching tool as he threw the dirt out, and once in a while his head would show for a fraction of a second. But I kept potting away, more to kill time than anything else.

He soon knew that I was after him, for every once in a while he would wave his little shovel at me just after I had taken a shot. All afternoon I kept this up, and about four thirty I was beginning to get rather tired of the game. I just happened to glance into

the glass of the periscope, and there was his whole head and shoulders showing above the little parapet.

I pulled the trigger, and he seemed to disappear almost at the same instant. It sounds rather long to tell about, but it all happened in a fraction of a second. I didn't know whether I had hit him or not and I was beginning to doubt it, when someone threw his body out and went on digging in his place. I had fired nearly four hundred rounds of ammunition to get one German, but I felt rather sick at having been finally successful.

Around five o'clock we started back to the car, and as we were going through the wood we saw one of our poor fellows sniped. We had several batteries of artillery in the vicinity, and this chap was an artilleryman. He was walking up a path which joined the one we were on, the junction of the paths being about a hundred yards ahead of us. We could hear the poor devil whistling as he came along, but his whistle was cut short

by the crack of a rifle. We rushed to the spot where he had gone down, and we found that he had a bullet through his right lung.

I got out my field dressing bandages, and we bound him up, tying the pad on the bandage tight over the bullet hole. We carried him down until we came to the artillery quarters, and there we gave him over to his comrades, who rushed him to the nearest Field Ambulance. I do not know whether he recovered or not; I have often wondered about it.

We found our car where we had left it, and we were back at Headquarters before dark. On the way back the old Colonel made a remark that I believe he really meant. He said, "I've enjoyed these two days immensely, and it brought back the days of my youth. Fate has decreed that my body shall remain in England, but God knows that my heart lies with you boys out here in the trenches."

A rather funny thing happened soon after

this which shows what a man who doesn't know the ropes will do when he gets excited. There is a very strict order to the effect that no man other than one detailed for the work shall touch or in any way disturb an unexploded enemy's shell. A heavy penalty is imposed for disobeying this order, and no one but a man who didn't know any better would think of doing it.

A new regiment came up and went straight into rest camp before going into action. A private in this regiment happened to run across an unexploded shell one day and, being the first he had ever seen, he was greatly excited. He picked it up and came dashing into camp with it. Before showing it to any one else who knew any better, he went straight to his commanding officer to exhibit his find.

"O, look what I found, sir," he said. "It's a German shell that hasn't exploded."

"Is it, really!" said the officer. "Well, I'll tell you what you can do with it. You

will take it into that field and you will dig a hole five feet deep, and you will bury your find there, providing, of course, it doesn't explode in your hands before you have time to carry out this order. Corporal! Fall in two men and see that this man obeys the order I have just given!"

You may be sure that that man never so much as looked at an unexploded shell after that.

During the time I was at the front I put six automobiles out of commission. According to an estimate made after a year of war, the average life of an automobile is eight days, and the life of a horse is about thirty hours.

The first auto I lost was due to engine trouble and I had to abandon it and leave it for the salvage companies to take care of. The second one was destroyed by a shell in the city of Ypres while I was in having some dinner. The third one I lost during the scrap for Hill 60. I got stuck in the middle

of a field, and as it was in doubtful position, I set fire to it and trusted to luck that I had done the right thing. The other three were used up by the fearful condition of the roads.

We knew several days before the attack came on Hill 60 that there was something in the wind. Our mining and tunneling companies had been working day and night, and also I noticed that the artillery seemed to be concentrating in that vicinity. Reinforcements were brought up, and everything seemed to point toward some doings in the near future.

Two days before the attack came off I was warned to hold myself in readiness to take a motorcycle machine gun into action, but I was not told anything about when I was likely to be wanted. When the attack did come it was a veritable "whale."

Hill 60 itself had hardly any right to be called a hill, for to me it looked like a little rising ground and that's all, but we had ninety-two batteries of artillery playing all over it, and

they kept up the heaviest possible bombardment for thirty-five minutes. When you think of three hundred and sixty eight cannon pouring shells into such a small place as one little hill, it may give you some idea of what we gave the Germans who were trying to hold it against us.

The bombardment stopped as abruptly as it started, and as soon as it ended the mines we had laid under the hill were set off. The earth seemed to tremble for a moment and then came a great rumbling roar, followed by an upheaval of earth which seemed to reach the clouds. The moment the mines had been set off our chaps left their trenches on the dead run, and they charged across the crater where Hill 60 had been but a few moments before.

The heavy artillery fire we had given the Germans had partly demoralized them, and the explosion of the mines finished the job, and they fled like sheep. Our machine gun was pouring steel into them for a few mo-

ments, but we had to stop, as our own men were pursuing them and it was not safe to continue our fire any longer. It was all over in a very short time, and while we had to stand by all night our work did not last very long during the actual battle.

Hill 60 showed the Germans what we really could do if we wanted to, and I think they had a little more respect for us after that. The disgusting part of the whole affair was that they re-captured the whole thing from us two days later. We motorcycle machine gun men were called again, but by the time we reached there it was all over, and, while the Germans had their old position back again, the hill existed no longer.

Hill 60 was a wonderful thing for us in one way, in that it showed not only the Germans what we could do, but it also showed our Allies and our own men what we were capable of. The Germans admitted afterwards that they never dreamed that such a bombardment was possible, and they said

that nothing could survive it. Hill 60 itself is no more, but it will live forever in the history of the most terrible war that was ever known.

Soon after this battle I secured my first "leave" to go to England for a rest of seven days, and, though this is supposed to be a story of my experiences while on the fighting front, I will relate something that happened while I was in Glasgow, Scotland.

Of all the cities in the British Isles, Glasgow has sent more men to the front than any other in proportion to her size. The business firms of the city encourage their men to enlist, and do all they can to make things easy for them to leave their families. In many cases firms continue to pay men their salaries while they are at the front. The street car company in Glasgow has sent thousands, and their places are taken by women while the men are away.

Not only are there women conductors on the street cars, but women drive the cars too.

When one arrives at the station in Glasgow it seems very odd to have a woman step up and ask to carry your bag. Women have taken the places of the porters in the stations.

Scotland has responded nobly to the country's call. In many of the small villages the entire male population has gone to the war, excepting, of course, the men who are too old or those who are physically unfit.

In the British Isles during this war a great many of the women have been "helping recruiting" by walking the streets and putting a white feather in the buttonhole of every man they meet who is not wearing khaki.

I was standing just outside the Central Station in Glasgow when a woman walked up to a man who was standing near me, and without a word she pulled a white feather through his buttonhole. He was a great big fellow, and she had to do some reaching to get at him. He smiled when he saw what she had done and said "Thank you, madam," very politely.

That was like waving a red flag before a bull, and she grew crimson, and started telling him what she thought of him. He listened until she was all through, and then he asked, "Have you another one of these feathers, by any chance?"

"Yes, I have, you coward," she snapped, and she put another feather on him. As she did so he pulled a Victoria Cross from his pocket and pinned it right under the feathers.

That woman gasped, and stuttered, and stammered trying to make an apology, and she reached out to take the feathers back, but he stopped her.

"No, madam," he said, "I'll keep these as souvenirs, if you don't mind, but I'd like to say a few words to you about what you are doing.

"Because I am in civilian clothes does not signify that I am a coward. For all you knew I might have been medically unfit for service. I might have been a married man with ten or a dozen small children depending

on me. I might have been any number of things that would have prevented me from joining the Army, but you didn't even wait to inquire.

"You simply thought that because I am not in khaki I was a coward and you thought to shame me into joining the Army. As a matter of fact, I have been at my home recovering from wounds I received when I won this little cross, and I am now on my way back to join my regiment.

"If you will accept a suggestion from a man who knows men, you will stop this silly business, for you are doing more harm than anything else, and if I were a civilian, and you had done it to me then, I would have faced a firing party before I would join the Army. I trust you have learned something. Good afternoon."

I found out later that he is a sergeant piper in one of the most famous Scottish regiments, and that he won the cross for saving three officers when wounded himself.

London at night is a very mysterious looking place. The streets are in darkness, and the vehicles carry only very dim oil lights. To prevent accidents the curbstones at the corners are painted white. The streets are crowded just the same, and everything is fairly gay, but under it all one feels the subdued feeling of excitement, and a sort of nervous tension as though everyone is keyed up to their highest point of efficiency.

There are still individuals in England who feel that their duty to their country may be satisfactorily fulfilled by staying at home and reading about the war in the papers. But on the other hand there are men who would gladly go if they could pass the medical examination. It is a shame that these two classes of men cannot be told one from the other.

I saw a "slacker" beautifully squelched in London the night I arrived there. When I alighted from the train the first place I made for was a restaurant where I could get some-

thing really good to eat and hear some good music at the same time. Two other fellows who had come over on the same boat accompanied me. We were absolutely filthy with mud, but we didn't care about anything until after we had eaten. We attracted quite a lot of attention going into the high class restaurant we had chosen, but it was obvious that we had just come from the trenches, so everyone was very nice to us.

We sat down and gave an order that nearly finished the waiter, and then we proceeded to enjoy the music and the agreeable surroundings. After a few moments a young fellow in evening clothes strolled over and engaged us in conversation. He asked us what part of the front we had come from and we told him. He then told us that he would not go to the front if the fate of the entire country depended on him. We assured him that it made no particular difference to us whether he went or not, but he kept right on with the same kind of talk. He told us

what fools we were, and he said that he was proud to be called a "slacker." Finally he asked one of my companions, "They need men badly about now, don't they?"

My friend handed him a beautiful answer, for he said, "Yes, we do need MEN, real MEN, so that lets you out. Now, Elizabeth, be on your way!" Needless to say he didn't seem to care much for our company after that.

CHAPTER VIII

SECOND BATTLE FOR CALAIS

MY rest of seven days seemed very short, and I was back on the sickening job at Poperinghe all too soon.

Ypres, which was six miles away, had been comparatively quiet all winter. In fact, it had been so quiet that our twenty-seventh Divisional Headquarters had moved in there. As the spring drew near the Germans began to shell around the city again, but very few shells landed directly in the city proper.

There was a big gas tank on the outskirts down toward Krustadt, and especially around this place the shell-fire would be rather heavy at times. The city was very much knocked about even then, but it was nothing to what it was at the end of the "Second

Battle for Calais," as it was called in England and France.

Before the beginning of this battle the Kaiser was quoted as having said that if he failed to break us this time, he would lay the city of Ypres to the ground, street by street. He failed to break us, all right, and he kept his word, for to-day the fine old city of Ypres is nothing but a shapeless heap of broken bricks.

For weeks before the attack came off our airmen were bringing in reports that the Germans were massing heavy bodies of fresh troops just in front of our position. All our transport trains went through the city, our men were billeted there and one of our divisional headquarters had moved into the city.

The Germans still continued to bombard our positions in this vicinity, but they left the city itself severely alone. All winter it had been as safe to go through Ypres as it would be to go to church, con-

sequently an order to go to Ypres did not bother anybody very much.

I was at the divisional headquarters in Ypres with a staff officer on the afternoon the bombardment started. We had gone to the city on horses, and we naturally expected to come back that way. I suppose it was about 2 o'clock when we arrived there, and I put the horses in the yard behind the buildings.

As I was still on duty, I didn't dare go very far away, for I didn't know at what moment the officer might show up. The first inkling I got of anything unpleasant happening was when I heard the scream of several shells coming through the air at once.

Right then I acted on the impulse that seizes everyone at such a time, and I went right through the nearest cellar window, where I landed on a pile of potatoes. I was content to stay there, too, until an orderly found me and told me that my officer wanted me. The Germans had been bombarding

us about a half hour then, and there was no signs of any letting up yet.

The orderly told me that the shells were dropping in at the rate of forty-one to the minute, and I remember wondering who on earth would be fool enough to count the number of shells falling. I reported to my officer and found him as cool as a cucumber. He asked me where the horses were and when I told him he said for me to leave them there and to go and find a car of some kind.

I knew it was mighty serious when he would abandon the horses, and I started out with the fear of God in my heart and wondering where in the dickens I would find a car in that inferno. As a matter of fact I did find one, or at least it had been a car at some time or other. It was an ambulance which had had the body blown off, and someone had built a couple of little bucket seats out of empty bacon boxes.

Bacon boxes or not, it certainly looked like a million gold dollars to me at that moment, and I wasn't so slow about nabbing it. The

engine was all right, so I decided to take a chance on the rest of it holding together until I got my officer through the city, anyway. I pulled around in front of the headquarters and the officer jumped in.

It seemed as though the whole city was being torn from its very foundations, so terrible was the din. The houses were going down in every quarter, and on the face of it it looked like pure madness to try to go through at all. Wagons, horses, autos, bicycles, were piled up everywhere. Men, women, and children, soldiers and civilians, were lying dead and dying in every street. I should say that about fifty per cent. of the shells were landing in the Grand Place, and the buildings were falling all around and practically covering up the road.

During the bombardment which preceded the first battle of Ypres the civilians had had a chance to get out, or part of them did, anyway, but it seemed as though nothing could live in this awful fire.

We had a straight run of about two hundred yards before we got to the worst part of it, and I certainly saw to it that the old 'bus made the most of what she had. We were going at a pretty good pace when we hit the main square of the city, but it seemed to me that we were just crawling.

There is a sharp corner as one turns out of the square, and I knew it would be impossible to twist her around it at the pace we were going, so I tried a stunt I had read about racing drivers doing on the hair-pin curves. I gave her more power, jammed on the brake, and we skidded around on two wheels. We were between the devil and the deep sea, and I felt that no chances we could take were too long considering the fix we were in.

The bacon boxes held together all right, and we got out of it without being touched, but I am ready and willing to admit that it was more by pure luck than anything else. What got my goat was that during the whole thing the officer sat there with a cigar in his

mouth and a monocle in his eye, and didn't even look as though he was nervous.

When we got back to our own headquarters he said "thank you" and dismissed me, and remarked to another officer that "one damned fool had escaped wearing a wooden uniform that day by the breadth of a gnat's eyelash." I presume he was referring to me, and I agree with him most heartily. Believe me, that ride did me out of a year's growth.

I certainly pitied our transport men during this time as I never pitied them before. They could not help being nervous while waiting to go through the city, which they had to do, as there was absolutely no other way for them to go.

The ambulances, too, suffered heavily. Think of how the poor wounded boys inside must have felt! All shot to pieces and suffering untold agonies, yet obliged to ride through that inferno of bursting shells and falling houses. It is a wonder that any of them lived through it. A good many of

the ambulances belonged to the St. John's Ambulance Association, and the drivers are young fellows who either volunteered with their own cars or were hired by the association to drive cars which have been given to the society. They are fine chaps and have done and are doing wonderful work.

Another organization that is doing the same kind of work is the British Red Cross Society. These societies are not military organizations, but in time of war they give their services to the Government and place themselves under the military for orders and discipline. The men employed by them are neither paid nor equipped by the Government, but their food is issued through the Army commissary for convenience' sake. They are all fine fellows and have stood the hardships and dangers like old stagers. Trip after trip they would make through the "death trap" expecting each one would be their last, and of course many of them realized their expectations.

All night the bombardment continued with unabated fury, yet our supplies went through the city to the men just the same.

The next morning I was ordered to report in my car to a young officer of the Intelligence Department. The officer told me that he had orders to go through Ypres to a little place called Potijze and to report himself to the divisional commander there.

There was absolutely no other way to get through to Potijze except to go through Ypres, and you may be sure we were feeling none too pleasant about the prospects. We had to go slowly, even at the start, as the road was filled with all kinds of transport. After we got through the village of Vlamertinghe we found the going a little better and we got along faster. The road from Vlamertinghe to Ypres is almost straight, and one can see right into the city before one comes within two kilometers of it.

As we swung into this straight stretch I noticed several German aeroplanes over

the city, and it was plain to be seen that they were dropping bombs. This time they were dropping petrol bombs, and the instant they exploded they would spray petrol all over the place and a flame would shoot up into the air. In this way they were setting fire to the city.

It was a terrible sight and one that I shall never forget. The shells were falling just the same, and what with the ground fairly trembling from the terrific explosions, the smoke from the bursting shells and burning houses, the crash of falling buildings, the flame and dust that filled the air, it made a scene that would need a Dante to describe and do it justice.

The thought that we were to attempt the passage through all this was terrifying. An awful fear, almost panic, seemed to grip me, and I longed to jump from that car and hide my face from that flaming hell which seemed to be stretching out its tentacles of fire to draw us into its gaping maw.

I felt weak all over and was wet with cold perspiration. I looked at the officer, almost praying that he would give the order to stop, but even as I looked I knew that there was no chance of that. He was as white as death, but there was a look of determination on his face, and the clenched teeth and set jaws gave no promise of his backing down.

I think that bulldog grit that he was showing helped me, for I resolved that, while I might get so weak as to be unable to drive that car, I would stick by him as long as I could hold out. And he certainly showed that he was "white" clear through, for he told me to stop a moment. I did, and he got out of the car.

"Robinson," he said, "I've just been thinking that there won't be any need for you to come any farther. It is a rotten business, and, as there are ambulances going up all the time, I can get a lift up on one, and will stand just as much chance of getting through as though you were to take me. I

don't believe in any one taking unnecessary risks, and in this case it would be risking an extra man and a car, too, and I don't mind going on an ambulance the least bit."

I thought it was just about one of the finest things I had ever heard of a man doing, and I want to say right here that such things as this are typical of the true British officer. There are men holding commissions who couldn't do such a thing as this to save their necks, but they are the "pikers" found in every country, "temporary gentlemen", as they are called by the real men who are obliged to associate with them.

My officer's generosity did not help me any, but I appreciated it more than I can tell. I had orders to take him to Potijze and to bring him back, and if I stayed behind and anything happened to him I would be worse off than if I were lying beneath the ruins of Ypres.

I explained this to him, and said that I would rather take him. God knows whether

it was true or not, but I said it, anyway. While we were talking another car passed us and, as my officer jumped in, I resolved to follow the man who was now ahead of me.

I noticed as the car passed us that there were two officers in it. One, a major, was sitting beside the driver, and the other, a colonel, was in the back. The car was about two hundred yards ahead of us, and I let him keep about that much lead all the way up to the outskirts of the city. As we got nearer the noise became deafening and the smoke began to bother us, too.

Before one enters the city proper one must cross a double line of railroad tracks. The machine ahead of us had just crossed these when a big fifteen inch shell screamed over and burst just beside the car in front. From where we were it looked as if the car and its occupants must have been wiped off the face of the earth.

I stopped our car to wait until the smoke cleared away before going on. It seemed like hours before we saw the spot again, but when

the smoke was finally gone you can imagine our surprise at seeing the car turned completely around and coming toward us.

The chauffeur was gathering speed all the time, and when he passed us his car was going at a fairly decent pace. We had time enough, though, to see one of the most horrible sights that I witnessed during the whole time I was at the front.

The car itself was in awful condition. The two rear doors were torn away, the body was full of jagged holes, the front and rear mud guards and the running board on one side were torn off and the wind screen had been swept away.

The major who was sitting with the driver had his head and the whole side of his body torn away, and the rest of him was leaning on the driver, who was being covered with the blood which was gushing from this awful thing beside him. The colonel who had been sitting in the back of the car was curled over on the seat and his head and part

of his shoulder were lying in a pool of blood in the bottom of the car. To me the most terrible part of it all was the driver! He was as white as a ghost and his eyes seemed to be sticking an inch out of their sockets. His teeth were bared and his whole face was twisted into the most hellish expression one could imagine. The knuckles of his hands stood out white, so hard was he gripping the steering wheel.

"Good God, he's gone mad!" cried my officer, and I was sure of it. The officer ordered me to turn around and follow him, and to catch him if possible. The car was away down the road by the time I got turned around, but I set out after him for all I was worth. I gained on him, too, but as I went through Vlamertinghe he was just stopping in front of the field dressing station there.

The orderly rushed out when he heard the car, and I heard that driver say, "For God's sake take this thing away from me!"

It was horrible beyond description. I saw

that poor fellow a couple of weeks later, and he was bad enough to look at even then. He was walking around alone all right, except that his face was continually twisting and twitching horribly. His nerve was completely gone, and he was discharged almost at once. For all the shock he had his was a miraculous escape.

When we saw that the driver was being taken care of we started back to make our attempt to pass through the burning city. This time I seemed to have lost all feeling of fear, and in fact I didn't have any feeling at all.

I tried to think about what was going to happen to us, for it worried me that I didn't seem to have a nerve in my body. I kept telling myself that I was going to my death and that in a few minutes I would be lying somewhere in those smoking ruins. But it was no use, I didn't care one way or the other. Before one comes to the railway tracks I referred to there is a road which branches

off to the left, and which leads to the village of Elverdinghe. Just before we came to where this road branches off the officer spoke.

"I think it would be worth while trying to get to the canal bank through Elverdinghe," he said, "and from there we would perhaps be able to leave the car, swim the canal, and get through to Potijze on foot. It will take longer, of course, but the main thing for us to do is to get there safely, no matter if it takes a great deal longer. Let us try that way, anyway."

I was willing to try anything, and so we turned off the road and headed for Elverdinghe. It is only a few kilometers, and we didn't take long getting there, but when we arrived we found that we had jumped out of the frying pan into the fire, for Elverdinghe was getting it hot and heavy from the German field batteries.

We rushed into the town, and as we swung into the village proper we came very near having one grand smash-up. A field ambu-

lance was moving out of the place, and the road was blocked by ambulances which were loading up with wounded. I jammed on the brakes and pulled over almost into the ditch, but the brakes stopped the car before we got clear in.

A sentry informed us that the road through the village was closed and that we would have to turn around and go back. I tried to back up, but my two front wheels were stuck away down in the ditch and she wouldn't pull out under her own power.

I appealed to the driver of an empty ambulance to help me, and he quickly got his towrope around my back axle and we came out with the first heave. I noticed while we were taking the towrope off that the car was a big six-cylinder American Pierce-Arrow.

I asked the driver how he liked a Yankee car, and from the way he replied I knew that he was an American himself. I asked him where he came from, and you can imagine my surprise when he said "Boston."

He said that the car had been furnished

by a Mr. Hunnewell in Boston, and that he had been sent with it when it came to France. "But," he said, "if I ever see the corner of Boylston and Tremont streets again nothing on this side of the water will ever tempt me. Never again!"

I never saw him again, and when I left him he was in one hot little corner of the map. I hope he gets through all right.

We reached Elverdinghe as quickly as we could and got out without a scratch, which is more important than anything else. We went back along the road until we came to the turning which leads to the village of Boesinghe. This village is on the bank of the canal, but it is a mighty unhealthy place to visit, as it is in full view of part of the German lines. Our plan was to go as close to the village as we dared and then leave the car and try to get through on foot. It was almost as dangerous as it would be to go through Ypres, but we figured that here we would at least have a fighting chance.

We left the car under some trees about half a mile from the village, and set out on foot. We hadn't been going ten minutes before a sentry stopped us again and informed us that the road was closed and we would have to go back. The officer explained things to him and told him that it was absolutely imperative that we get through, and that this was the only way it could be done. The sentry said that he was very sorry, but he had strict orders from the Assistant Provost Marshal, and he dared not let us pass. There was nothing left for us to do but to turn back.

We went straight back to headquarters and the officer explained that it was impossible for us to get through. He came back and ordered me to report to him the next morning and we would try again. The next day they were bombarding just as heavily and the city was still burning, so all I had to do was to stand by and hold myself in readiness all day long.

We saw a very exciting incident that day.

There was a big ammunition column near our headquarters, and it was waiting there all ready loaded until it was sent for. It had been there several weeks then, and the chaps who belonged to it were having the softest time they ever had in their lives.

About 2 o'clock in the afternoon I was standing on a corner near this column when I saw one of the police go up and speak to a chap who was walking around it with a note-book in his hand. They talked for a few moments and then a policeman sauntered down to where I was standing and came up and spoke to me.

"Go down to the guard room," he said, "and have the corporal fall in two men and bring them up here as quick as God will let him. That fellow there by the column is getting all kinds of information and putting it in his book. Now hurry, but take your time until you get out of sight of this place. I'll look after him until the guard comes."

I was naturally all excited, but I did as he

said, and it wasn't many minutes before we were on our way back at the double. Our man was still there, but the minute he saw us he got started. Our policeman pulled his revolver and fired after him. He didn't stop for a second, but he pulled a couple of guns himself and every few seconds would send a shot back at us as he ran.

Fellows were joining in the chase all the time, and it was getting interesting. The end came very suddenly when two of our chaps with rifles appeared in the road ahead of the fugitive and ordered him to halt. He fired on them for an answer, so they raised their rifles and brought him down.

Examination showed that he was a German. He had on German service dress under the British uniform he was wearing. The little book our policeman referred to certainly was a gold mine of information. He had the name, location and strength of every unit in our vicinity, and also the location of a good many of our batteries. He was a brave fellow

all right, and he played the game clear to the end.

The next day I reported myself as usual for the trip to Potijze and we decided to make the try again. Even as we got near Ypres the fire seemed to slacken and we rushed straight through without mishap.

If Ypres had been in bad condition before this, I don't know how it would be described now! In the center of the town there was scarcely a building left standing. All the towers but one had been knocked off the famous Cloth Hall, and the whole place had been gutted by fire. The cathedral was all down except half of the tower, and the inside of that was still burning.

The streets were littered with bodies of every description, and broken wagons, ambulances, water carts, etc., lay everywhere. The roads were almost obliterated, and we were riding over broken bricks and mortar. The shells were still coming over, but they were no worse than what we had run through

before, so we did not mind them very much. We found the road the other side of Ypres about as usual, so we got up to Potijze without any more excitement.

Potijze is a very tiny place which has seen some hard fighting from time to time. There is really very little left of the place itself, but our trenches run just outside the village, and we have dugouts all around there. On our arrival my officer told me to turn the car around and then to get into one of the dugouts and wait for him. He said he would find me when he wanted me. I did as he told me, and for some reason or other I left the engine running. I shut the throttle clear down, so she was just barely ticking over.

I looked around and found a dugout not twenty yards away, and went in. Two officers were there at the time, but they told me to sit down, and they went on with their work.

I found some paper and a pencil and started to write a letter. After a few minutes

one of these officers got up and went out. I don't think it was more than ten minutes later that I heard a lot of running around and shouting over our heads, and I wondered what it could be.

Then I noticed that my throat and nose seemed to be burning, and my eyes commenced to water. I couldn't draw a breath without sharp pain piercing my throat and lungs. It struck me suddenly that it was the gas! The officer who had left a few minutes before poked his head down and shouted, "Run like hell, it's the gas!"

By this time I could hardly see, and I was doing some tall old scrambling to get out of that place. I would hold my breath as long as I could and then I'd take another breath through my khaki handkerchief, for handkerchiefs are issued to us regularly. When I got outside I found that everything was covered with a greenish yellow haze, and I couldn't see three feet in front of me.

I ran in the direction of the place I had

left my car, and I struck it the first shot. Perhaps I wasn't thankful I had left the engine running! I jumped in and started down that road for all I was worth, and before I had gone one hundred yards I was off the road and stuck in a plowed field. I was clear of the gas, though, and that was all I cared.

I waited there for two hours before any one appeared, and when a fatigue party finally came along the road I had them help me get the car out. They got eight horses and we hitched them on to the back. I raced my machine and the horses pulled, and after a half an hour's work the car was back on the road again.

No sooner had they gone than my officer showed up safe and sound and we started back for camp. I had given him up for dead, of course, and I had intended going back to headquarters to report what had happened. He had got clear of the gas, as he had been away to the rear with the General.

It was a terrible experience, and we were absolutely helpless, as we had not been furnished with the respirators and gas helmets at that time. We secured these things soon after, but all the time I had mine I never saw another sign of the gas.

I found out afterward that those two officers who had been in the dugout with me were both killed at that time by the gas.

The officer who was with me at the time of the gas attack was one of the most remarkable men I ever met. For several years before the war he had been on the British Secret Service in Germany, so he spoke German almost as well as he did English.

One day we stopped at a hospital in Bailleul and one of the orderlies told us that there were some German wounded there. The officer asked me if I would like to go in and see them while he talked with them. I said I would like it very much, so we went in. There was one poor devil all by himself among some English patients. The officer went over and

sat on the edge of his bed and began to talk to him.

If you could have seen that poor fellow's face when he heard himself addressed in his own language! His whole countenance lighted up, and he began to talk. Pretty soon the tears began to run down his cheeks, and I felt awfully sorry for the poor chap, who was away from all his own people, severely wounded, and with the knowledge that he wouldn't see them again until after the war was over.

He said that he had just been married before the beginning of the war, and he and his wife had saved all they could, and two days before he was called up they had bought a cow. He was as worried as he could be for fear something had happened to the cow. It was really pitiful, and I wished I was out of it all and away from all the suffering.

CHAPTER IX

BOMBARDMENT OF YPRES

THE bombardment of Ypres began again the night of the April day we experienced the gas, and with the bombardment began the infantry attack. I was up at a little place called Rheninghelst, and I could hear the rifles and machine guns at it for all they were worth. I was thanking my lucky stars that I was on my car instead of a motorcycle machine gun, when an orderly rode up and told me that I was to report at headquarters at once.

All the way back to camp I had the feeling that something was going to happen, and when I arrived there I was told to report myself to the signal company for duty with my motorcycle. Then I knew that I was to carry dispatches through the coming battle.

WOUNDED BRITISH SOLDIERS IN THE BOMBARDMENT OF YPRES.

Drawn by P. Matani for "The Sphere", London, and copyrighted in the United States by The New York Herald Company.

I wish to make particular note of the fact that at the beginning of this battle, which lasted three weeks, we dispatch riders numbered thirty-one in all for our corps. Half an hour later we were fully equipped and on our way to the advanced report center, which would be the scene of our activities until the fight was over.

We were about eight hundred yards to the rear of the first line of trenches and were given an old barn to ourselves, and we laid out our blankets and made our beds, for it was 10.30 o'clock. The attack was increasing in fury all the time, all kinds of shells landing around us; and the Germans were using their same old tactics of hurling great masses of troops against our position.

Our machine guns gave the usual good account of themselves, and the German dead were piled up over our wire entanglements in great heaps. The Germans would fall back, re-form and come on again in their usual close formation. So it went all night, and

when the morning came the "dead ground" between the two lines of trenches was a gruesome-looking place.

During the day the Germans bombarded our first and second-line trenches with high explosives and shrapnel all day, and at night they resumed their infantry attack on our position. Day after day and night after night, the battle continued until we all felt dead and numb all over.

Sometimes the Germans would penetrate our lines for a few yards, and then we would immediately "counter" and get our position back again before they had a chance to strengthen their position. We lost an awful lot of men, but even though I don't know the exact figures I know I am safe in saying that the German losses were more than double what ours were.

We dispatch riders were certainly kept busy during this time. Our work was to be standing by every minute of the day and night, and the moment we were wanted, to sling the dis-

patch case over the shoulder and get away for the Headquarters to the rear.

The riding at night was terrible. The Germans were shelling all the roads in the vicinity, and we had to go dashing along through the inky blackness at the breakneck pace. It was impossible to see more than a yard or two ahead, and so it was a case of ride like the dickens and trust to luck. The road was covered with shell holes, and the first intimation we would get of the fact was when we would feel the motorbike drop beneath us and feel ourselves shooting through the air like amateur skyrockets.

We would pick ourselves up, drag the motorbike out of the hole, and, if it would still run, jump on it and get away again. We certainly got some terrible spills, and there were a good many who got broken bones, and a few who had their necks and backs broken. Many a night I have ridden up and down that road blubbering like some great baby from pure fatigue and nervousness.

Imagination cannot conceive of our utter misery. Everywhere I looked, at all hours of the day and night, it was just nightmare. The stench from dead bodies all around us was sickening. Most of the time we were kept too busy to sleep and we would be so tired we could hardly move. The constant din of the guns of all sizes and the exploding shells was enough to drive nearly all of us insane.

Personally I was as dirty as a pig. All the trenches are full of lice and we were all so filthy that we could see the vermin running all over our bodies.

If those persons who speak of the glories of war could really see it in all its dirtiness and nastiness and utter misery they would perhaps speak less glibly about the good it does to a nation to go to war.

Perhaps this little incident will show what awful condition our nerves were in. A young fellow named Lewis and I had chummed together for the time being, and we rode the

same route during the entire battle. One night he came down to headquarters just ahead of me, and, I assure you, we came through some mighty hot territory. I was in awful condition myself, but I think he was even worse.

I handed my case in, and, while I was waiting for orders, I went out to the petrol stores to fill up the tank on my bike. Lewis was talking to the officer in charge of the riders, and was standing with his back to the door. Another fellow came in carrying two empty petrol tins, and, unintentionally of course, he dropped them just behind Lewis. They made quite a racket, and coming so suddenly, poor Lewis jumped clear over a table and fainted dead away.

We were all in about the same condition, and it didn't take much to get a rise out of us. Poor Lewis was killed the next night by falling into a shell hole.

About the fifth or sixth night of the battle, the Germans broke through us, and advanced

nearly a mile into our territory. They held their gain about fourteen hours, when we counter-attacked, and took it all back again. Of course our advanced-report center retired as the Germans advanced, but I was down at the permanent headquarters at the time, so I didn't get any of the excitement of the retirement.

When we advanced again our road lay over ground that had been in German hands during the few hours they held the ground they had gained. This ground was littered with hundreds of the dead and wounded, which made it still more unpleasant to travel over. Our Red Cross contingent were working like madmen, but there were so many wounded and dying they could not attend to them all at once. The Red Cross has lost most of its meaning of protection from enemies' bullets.

A dispatch rider was coming over this road just as daylight dawned. Two wounded Germans lay on the side of the road, and as

the rider passed, one of them called to him and asked for a drink of water. The rider stopped, turned around and went back, threw his water bottle to them, and then turned around and started on again. As the rider turned these two men both fired on him, and one of the bullets struck part of his motorcycle.

War in itself is bad enough without this kind of thing, and, as everybody knows, there has been a lot of it going on on both sides. Viewing the above incident from America where the horrors of the great war cannot be realized, I don't think that even here any man can truthfully say that, were he placed in such a position as this, he would "turn the other cheek."

All the time this great battle was raging the bombardment of Ypres continued, and not only Ypres alone, but all the surrounding villages, and the roads leading from one to the other also.

I said that at the beginning of this battle

our corps of dispatch riders numbered thirty-one in all. At the end of the engagement, three weeks later, there were only four of us left out of the original thirty-one who started.

The Germans failed to break us, and so the Kaiser kept his word regarding what he said he would do to the city of Ypres. Day after day they bombarded the place, so that now there is not one single house in the place left standing. No civilians are allowed anywhere near the city, and we have found other ways of getting our supplies up to the trenches. The city is now known as the "forbidden area", and no one is allowed to pass through it without a special permit.

For some reason the Germans still continue to shell the place from time to time, but they can't do any more damage than what they have already done. The end of the battle found us with our position still intact, and I don't think they will ever come any nearer

Motor Patrol Work. Writing a Report.

to breaking through the British lines than they did at this time.

After the battle I was, of course, relieved of my job as motorcycle dispatch rider and resumed my duty as orderly to headquarters.

CHAPTER X

GERMANS FEAR CANADIANS

A GREAT deal has been said of the Canadians and the wonderful fighting they did in Belgium in the spring of 1915. Too much praise cannot be given them; for men who had not been in action before, their conduct was marvelous. The first of the Canadian regiments to come into action were the Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry. This regiment was in one of the Divisions in our Army Corps, so I saw quite a bit of them from time to time. They were a fine body of men and were very highly thought of by all the English regiments with whom they were associated. They were strong men and needed strong leaders to keep them at their highest point of efficiency.

Such men as Colonel Farquhar they adored, and there was nothing he could ask them to do that would remain undone. It was his custom to lead his men into action carrying nothing but a walking stick, and little things like this mean a great deal to the men of a regiment.

At the time the Canadians were brought into action we had some black troops on our extreme left. The Germans sent over some gas, and these black troops were forced to retire. Supports were called for, and as ours was the nearest headquarters in the vicinity the call came to us.

We had no spare troops available right on the spot, so the men of the headquarters unit (orderlies, messengers, etc.) were called upon to go up and act as supports until reinforcements could be brought up. We went up on the dead run and found that the black troops had retired, so we went into the position just in front of the Germans. The Kaiser's troops had advanced about two

miles, but had stopped at the last trench of our first line of defense. There were no more trenches for four miles.

The troops who had retired were ordered into rest camp when we took the position over, so we had to go in and hold until the Canadians came up. The Germans made no attempt to advance any further, and we certainly were in no position to quarrel with them just then. We waited there all night, and just before dawn the Canadians arrived. They didn't stop for anything, and went right over the top of us and at the Germans. We acted as supports for them during this engagement, and it was a treat to see the way they went after them.

Trench after trench they took without any let up. The Germans contested every inch of the ground, but nothing could stop the Maple Leaf boys that morning. When the Germans waited long enough for the fighting to come to close quarters, the Canadians were right there with the cold steel, and

when the Germans kept their distance those boys showed that they know which end of a rifle the bullet comes from.

The Canadians had advanced about a mile in this way when the Germans brought up some reinforcements and immediately started to counter-attack. They drove us back a few hundred yards, but we made a stand, and after the edge had worn off the German attack we commenced to advance again.

This time there was no denying the Canadians, and they went right through until they had retaken all the ground that had been lost. They also recovered four guns which the Germans had captured.

As nearly as I can tell, it was at this time that the reports began to fly around that no prisoners were being taken. This is an extremely difficult thing to speak of. There is no doubt that on certain occasions both sides have refused to take any prisoners, but I would not care to place the responsibility or the beginning of the practice in any one particular place.

My sympathies are with the Allies, and I would not like to think that they started it, but at the same time I would not care to accuse any of the other belligerents of having taken the initiative. It is terrible to think that civilized nations are capable of such brutality, but the fact remains that it is going on, and probably will continue until the end of the war.

There is no doubt of the fact that the Germans hate and fear the Canadians. A peculiar thing happened soon after the Canadians so distinguished themselves. A certain English regiment received orders to take some trenches at a given time. The officers of this regiment had the men fix their bayonets, and stick them over the parapet of the trench several minutes before the attack was to be made. They did so, and kept clashing their bayonets one against another, and making an awful row generally.

When the whistle blew, a young subaltern was the first man over the parapet, and he

yelled at the top of his voice, "Come on, Canadians!"

This got the Germans' goat, and our fellows took three lines of trenches without losing a man. All of which goes to show that the Germans, while they may hate the Canadians, fear them also.

During a flurry which took place about this time, an incident happened which shows how little the British soldier cares for the dramatic or sensational. There was considerable hand-to-hand fighting on the dead ground between the two lines of trenches. A bomb landed in our trench and lay there with the fuse sputtering. Quick as a thought, a big, burly Welshman picked it up and threw it back over the parapet.

It hit a German officer right in the small of the back just as it exploded. Of course it spread him all over the landscape.

One of our officers turned to this big Welshman and shouted, "Man alive, do you know what you've done? Why, you deserve the

Victoria Cross for that!" To which the Welshman replied rather sourly, "Aye, Sir, mebbe so. Anyhow, I'd rather have the Victoria Cross than one o' those wooden 'uns."

Our headquarters were still in Poperinghe, and the German aeroplanes continued to visit us every morning, as usual. Occasionally they would drop some bombs and kill a few civilians, but the situation was not critical enough to cause us to move the headquarters.

On Saturday morning, April 24, I had taken my car down to the corps supply column to fill up with petrol, when a shell came over and landed in the field just beside the column. It was the first shell we had had in Poperinghe, and, believe me, I didn't wait to see whether there were any more on the way. I had been detailed to go to Boulogne, and I got started mighty quickly.

No sooner had that shell landed than the civilians commenced to move. It was

the same old story. Panic everywhere among the women and children, and the road was choked with them. The second shell landed about ten minutes later, so I judged they were only using one gun, and it was a small one at that. There was nothing, therefore, to get excited about.

I picked up a priest and two old women, and gave them a lift as far as Cassel, where they could get a train later in the day for Calais or Boulogne. I reached Boulogne shortly after 10 o'clock, and at 1 o'clock I was on my way back. When I arrived in Poperinghe everything seemed as quiet as usual, and I was very much surprised, as I had expected to find shells pouring into the place from all directions.

It seems that the Germans had run an armored train through, and had begun shelling the town from the train. Our artillery went into action right away, and, instead of hitting the train first, they shelled the tracks behind the train, and tore the road

all up so that the train could not get back. Then they took their time and blew the train off the map.

Sunday morning the shells began to fall in the town again, and they were big ones this time — twelve-inch, I heard later. We knew that it was no armored train this time, and we knew that we were in for a hot time.

I was detailed with my car for the Field Cashier, which meant that if the order came to move, I would have an officer, armed escort, and all the money belonging to the Headquarters, amounting to over forty thousand dollars. All I had to do at the time was to stand by and wait for orders.

They kept up the shell fire all day, but at night they quit. There were quite a few of our chaps killed, and many civilians, too.

The chaplain of No. Three Casualty Clearing Station had taken over a building, and had started a Soldiers' Home. It was a place where a fellow could go when he was off duty,

and there were books, magazines, cake, tea, etc., to be had for the asking. It was a fine thing, and it was always crowded, for the fellows enjoyed it immensely.

This was the first building to be hit, and it was full of fellows at the time. A twelve-inch shell crashed through the roof and exploded on the second floor. The building caved in like a house built of cards. The marvelous part of it all was that, although there must have been fully one hundred fellows in there at the time not a single one was killed! A few had some scratches and other minor injuries, and one fellow had his arm broken, but these were the only casualties from this shell.

I lost all my belongings during this bombardment. I had been keeping my kit bag in the loft of a stable, and a shell came through and laid the building to the ground.

All day Monday the shelling continued and still no orders came for us to move. Things were beginning to look serious now, and we wondered how much longer we would

have to stick it out. It was the most unsatisfactory duty one could imagine. There we were doing absolutely nothing, and the Germans throwing shell after shell into us. We had no chance to hit back, and there was nothing for us to do except to stand by and take our chances.

When the order did come to move, the Field Cashier was the last one to be notified, but even though we were the last to get the order, we were the first ones out, and I was happy to say good-by to that place. We went about six kilometers down the road and took over temporary headquarters in a little village.

It was just after we moved down to this little village that I got the only scratch I ever had during the whole campaign. I was on the Dickebusch road with a staff colonel, and we had been visiting some regiments that were out of action at the time. While we were there the Germans started shelling, and we decided that it would be better for

us if we moved to a healthier locality. The colonel was sitting in the tonneau of the car, while I, of course, was in the driving seat.

As we swung out into the main road we heard a shell coming, and automatically I put on more speed. The shell burst right on the side of the road. One piece of it flew through the bottom of the car, and tore the footboard right from under the colonel's feet. It didn't bother him the least bit; he simply swung his feet right up on to the seat and advised me to crowd on a little more speed.

Another little piece of the shell just grazed my right leg, just above the knee. It was a mere scratch, but it scared me as nothing ever has since, and I guess I thought my whole leg was gone.

The same shell that came so close to us caught another poor fellow and wounded him in the back in twenty-nine different places, and with all this he walked a quarter of a mile to a dressing station.

CHAPTER XI

PREFERRED FIRING LINE TO HOSPITAL

SOON after this I reported sick for the first time since I had been in the British Army. I had a growth in my throat, and they sent me to a hospital in Armentières. There they removed the growth and put me to bed on a stretcher.

I was in the hospital only three days, and during my entire stay there the Germans shelled the town the entire time. I felt awfully sorry for the poor fellows there who were absolutely helpless, and didn't know at what moment a shell might come through and wipe them off the face of the earth.

I stood it for three days, and when I saw that they had made no move to discharge

me from hospital, I asked the orderly in my ward when I would be likely to get out.

"O," he said, "you won't be out of here for a week yet!"

"Won't I?" I asked. "Well, you just go down to the other end of the ward and turn your back for a few moments, and see whether I will get out or not!"

He said he couldn't do a thing like that, but the next time he was down there, I simply got up and walked out. In these hospitals so near the firing line there are no such things as beds, and one simply lies on a stretcher with his clothes all on.

When I reached the gate of the hospital I found a policeman on duty there, but I simply said the magic word "Duty", and walked right by him. I got a lift on a motor-lorry for fourteen miles, and I walked the other eight back to camp.

When I returned and reported myself they asked me for my discharge sheet, but

I said I had lost it, so there was nothing they could do about it.

There is a place near the Belgian frontier called Bailleul. It is a fairly big place, and used to be one of the places where we received supplies. This town is within easy range of the German guns, but for some unaccountable reason it has never had but one shell in it since the beginning of the war.

It has been in German hands, however. This happened soon after I arrived in France and our troops were the first ones in the place after the Germans left. There are always a few of the more venturesome civilians who are willing to take a chance if they can see any way by which they can make something out of it. These people will remain in a place until every one else has gone, and then help themselves to whatever is lying around loose.

When we rode into Bailleul only an hour or so after the Germans had left, I saw what

I think was just about the most wholesale looting I have ever witnessed. Some civilians had one of their crazy three-wheeled carts backed up to a jewelry store, and were moving the place out by the arm load. As soon as they saw us they took to their heels, and of course we gave chase. One fellow jumped on a horse and started to beat it for all he was worth. Another fellow and I chose him for our quarry, and we had a few minutes' exciting run.

I think he would have escaped had he not become ambitious, and tried to take his horse over a fence. The horse didn't make the jump, and Mr. Looter took an awful tumble. When we searched him we found twenty-eight gold watches on him and several other things of value. The penalty for looting is death for the military, but after we turned the man in I heard that he and the others were handed over to the Belgian police for punishment.

After we took the town over this time

the Germans never saw Bailleul again. The time I refer to when a shell dropped on the place was on a Sunday morning last summer. We had just come away, and we were on the road back to our camp.

We heard the shell scream over our heads, and of course we thought Bailleul was in for a bombardment. This shell landed in the grounds of the big lunatic asylum, part of which we were using for a hospital. I believe there were fourteen casualties from this one shell, seven killed and seven wounded.

It seems very strange that they should put one shell into the town and then leave it strictly alone.

In the spring of 1915 the Kaiser paid a visit to the German trenches. I guess he came very quietly, for the first we knew of it was when the Germans in the trenches opposite us raised a big board above their parapet on which was printed something like this:

THE EMPEROR WAS HERE YESTER-
DAY.
HAD YOU ONLY KNOWN!
THE ENGLISH WERE EVER SLOW

Our chaps printed a board which went them one better. It said:

THE KING HAS BEEN HERE TWICE.
TOMORROW THE PRESIDENT
OF FRANCE COMES.
WE ARE NOT AFRAID TO TELL YOU
NOW.
FRITZ, YOU ARE HARMLESS!

To carry the joke to the end, somebody dug up a silk hat from somewhere, and about 1 o'clock all the fellows began to cheer. Then they stuck the hat on the end of a stick and carried it along the trench, so that it could be seen from the German trenches.

That hat was absolutely riddled with

bullets, but they carried it clear to the end of the trench, and then they threw both hat and stick over the parapet so that the Germans could see how they had been fooled. And how our fellows howled!

The Germans were so mad, I think they would have done us violence had they had the opportunity. A little thing like this means a lot to the boys in the trenches, and it is the subject of the conversation for days and days afterward.

Later we began to have more trouble with spies. We caught bunches of them, but there always seemed to be plenty more of them about. Occasionally there would be a Belgian among them, but for the most part they were Germans, and we could not understand it at all. We caught them in all guises, but for the greater part they seemed to fancy kilts as being the most above suspicion. On the face of the thing this is ridiculous, for who can imitate the Scotch accent so as to get by in the British lines?

In one week we caught fourteen Germans who were wearing the kilt, and they all seemed to be very much surprised that they should have been captured while posing as Scotsmen.

To put a stop to this spying it was decided to close all roads for a period of twenty-four hours. All men were warned that from 9 o'clock on such and such a night, until 9 o'clock the following night, they were not to leave their units without the special pass provided for these twenty-four hours.

Sentries were placed two hundred yards apart on all the roads in the daytime and one hundred yards apart at night. All these preparations were made very quietly, and the greatest secrecy preserved. I was detailed with my car to patrol certain roads during the twenty-four hours, and, of course, all the other roads were patroled, too. We had orders to stop every one we met, and if they were not provided with the special pass we were to take them prisoners regardless of

what uniform they were wearing. It looked like tiresome work, but it proved to be rather exciting.

I started over my route promptly at 9 o'clock, and you may be sure I was all on edge to make a capture. My car was flying the flag of the Army Corps headquarters, so I was not bothered by the sentries stopping me. I went over the route the first time without meeting a soul who wasn't quite all right. I was much disappointed, for I thought I would be picking up spies wholesale. On the second trip I began to think that I was going to have about the same luck as I did on the first, for everything seemed very quiet and peaceful.

I came to the village of Herzeele, and turned into the road which leads to Watou, and, as I say, I was beginning to be sick of my job. There is rather a sharp curve in this road, and as I turned it I saw, by the light of my electric headlights, two men standing in the middle of the road. The minute

they caught sight of my car they started out across a field as hard as they could go.

I yelled at them and jammed on my brakes. They didn't stop, so I pulled my revolver and sent a couple of persuaders after them. That brought them to a halt all right, and they started yelling "Friend!" at the top of their voices. I twisted the searchlight on my car around until the light shone full on them, and then I called to them to keep their hands in the air and come back on the road.

They didn't seem very anxious about it, but I assured them that if they didn't I would fill them full of holes, and I certainly felt fierce enough to do it. They came on to the road and I made them stand one on each side of the car. Then I noticed that one of them had on a pair of German soldiers' boots, and I knew then that I had a fish for sure. I got out and searched them, but they were unarmed.

What was worrying me was the fact that in taking them back, one of them would have to

sit behind me in the car. I took off my spare tires and put them in the back of the car, and with the straps I bound one fellow's feet and hands. I piled him into the tonneau, and made the other fellow sit in front with me. I assured him that if he made a single move I didn't like, I would pump him full of lead P. D. Q.

In this way I took them into camp without accident. They were shot as spies two days later. Our haul for the twenty-four hours was thirty-one spies, and every one of them was a German.

One of the most terrible things I ever witnessed was the destruction of the Château, at Hooge. This château was in a very peculiar position, being on the dead ground between our trenches and the Germans. Sometimes we would hold it and sometimes they would, and it offered great chances to both for sniping.

Sometimes we held part of it, and they would hold the other part. Then there was some great old hand-to-hand fighting.

Our fellows in one room would be digging holes through the wall, to pot at Germans in the next. It was so close to our trenches that we did not dare shell it, and the same thing applied to the Germans. It was decided to mine the thing and blow it off the face of the earth. I think the Germans had decided the same thing, and it was simply a case of who would get their mines laid first.

We got the jump on them, and when everything was ready our boys enticed the Germans into it, and then the work of destruction started. I was sitting on horseback, behind some staff officers; we were about half a mile from the place, but we had our ears stuffed with cotton, to prevent the explosion from injuring our hearing.

When the mines were set off we saw a sight such as one observes only once in a lifetime. The earth trembled, a low, growling rumble ensued, then a mighty crash, and the air was filled with smoke, flame, bricks, dust, flying bodies, heads, legs, and arms. Our fellows

let out a mighty cheer and charged across the crater formed by the explosion. The Germans seemed stunned by the awful sight they had witnessed, and we took several lines of trenches from them with very little trouble. The losses on the German side were terrible, and we lost heavily ourselves. The Château at Hooge will always be remembered by those who saw it.

His Majesty the King paid his armies a visit last Fall, and as I had never seen King George I was much interested. I had seen the King of Belgium, and also President Poincaré of France, but up to this time I had never seen the King for whom I was fighting.

We were warned the day before, and every one had to be bright and shining for the big event. The King drove up in a car bearing the royal standard on it, and you may be sure that car was given the right of way over everything. Two dispatch riders had dashed along the road ahead of the car, clearing the

way, so that nothing should delay the royal party. I was one of a large detail of mounted men who acted as escort to His Majesty.

When he left the car he mounted the beautiful horse that was waiting for him, and, escorted by the guard, he rode out to the reviewing stand. He made a speech to the men, who were formed up on the parade, and he thanked them for their loyalty and devotion to England in her time of need.

I could only hear a few words of his address, as I was stationed quite a distance away from him. As he finished the speech he saluted; the fellows threw their hats into the air and let out a mighty cheer. When this happened every horse on the ground, including my own, stood right up on his hind legs and reached for the blue skies above.

The King was thrown in some way, and sustained injuries that were rather serious. The accident acted as a damper to the enthusiasm, and the King's visit ended much differently than was expected.

The last engagement of any importance I was in was the big attack at Loos in September. This was one of the biggest offensive movements made by the Allies during the entire war.

In a big attack like this no one knows but the commanders just where the real thrust is coming. Several attacks are made, and for all we know ours might be the real one, or the real one may be twenty miles away from us.

It happened that at the time of the last attack we were almost sure that the big drive was coming through us. We were ordered to be ready to move at a moment's notice, and all preparations were made for a big shift. When the attack came we thought that we were on our way at last, and everybody was "counting chickens."

There certainly was some terrible fighting, and if all we were supposed to do was to keep the Germans interested on our front we were very successful. Several things in this engagement deserve mention, and among the

first is the famous charge of the London Irish. They had not been heard of very much up to this time, but I don't think there are many who don't know of them now. They received orders to take certain trenches at a certain time, and on the face of it the thing looked impossible. The odds were all against them, and they knew it, but there was nothing for it but to obey their orders.

Nearly all the regiments have footballs with which they amuse themselves while in rest camp, and when they go into action these footballs are taken right along with them. When the whistle blew for the London Irish to charge, they threw their footballs over the parapet, and made their charge dribbling the footballs in front of them.

It was the most reckless, daredevil thing I ever saw, and it accomplished the impossible for them. As I said, by all rights the entire regiment should have been wiped out, as the odds were against them, and they were running right into a death trap. The fact that

they went at it in such a devil-may-care way as to joke, and play with footballs in the very face of certain death, broke the Germans' nerve, and they gave way with practically no resistance at all. Instead of the regiment being wiped out, as it should have been, the men took the trenches with losses of under a hundred. It was wonderful.

Another strange thing happened just after this attack. We captured two prisoners one day, and when we brought them in we took them up to the officer in charge of the company occupying that trench. He questioned them, and they seemed perfectly willing to tell all they knew.

One of them ended up by saying that the trenches we were in were all mined and that the mines were to be exploded at 1 o'clock the following morning. He seemed so earnest about it that the officer believed him and decided to withdraw the men before 1 o'clock.

At twelve all the men except two or three lookout men were withdrawn, and we waited

developments. One o'clock came and nothing happened. So did 2 o'clock and 3. When 3 o'clock passed the officer decided that the man had been lying, and he put the men back into the trenches. At 4 o'clock the mine went off. It is believed that the Germans had intended setting the mine off at 1 o'clock just as this fellow said, but when these fellows gave themselves up the Germans suspected what might happen, and simply changed the hour for the explosion to take place.

CHAPTER XII

BRAVERY OF AVIATORS

I HAVE referred to the work of our aeroplanes in various parts of this story, but I think that noncombatants sometimes fail to realize what an important and effective part the Royal Flying Corps is playing in this war. Aeroplanes themselves are still pretty dangerous modes of locomotion, and when it comes to running other risks for the sake of gaining information or doing material damage, it needs a man who does not know what the slightest qualm of fear is, and who is cool and ready for action in the case of emergency to make a good military aviator.

We had several aviators in our squadrons who have made big names for themselves.

Among them are Capt Strange, D.S.O.; Lieut. Hawker, V.C., D.S.O., M.C., and also Robert Lorraine, the popular actor, who is commonly known as the "actor-airman."

These three in particular have distinguished themselves on our little front. Captain Strange has a lame foot, but he has done some of the finest work of the war. In three days he destroyed three stations or big rail centers which were of great importance to the Germans. In each case he employed the same methods. He flew over the point he was aiming for, stopped his engine, did a nose dive to within a few hundred feet of the place, dropped his bomb and got away safely. Each time he came back with the planes of his machine riddled with bullets. It takes an awful lot of nerve to do a thing like that!

Lieutenant Hawker was the terror of the "Avatiks" and taubes, and he has been known to fight three of these big machines single handed, destroying two, and putting the other one to flight. Mr. Hawker longed

for the chance to get mixed up with a Zeppelin, and on one occasion he nearly realized his wish.

It was a bright moonlight night last summer when everything was as quiet and peaceful as one could wish it to be. A scattering rifle fire could be heard from the trenches but there was really nothing doing at all. About 9 or 10 o'clock we heard the hum of an engine away above us, and we thought, of course, it was an aeroplane. As it came nearer we realized that no aeroplane engine could make so much noise as that, and very soon word was passed around that there was a Zeppelin above us.

Very few of us had ever seen a Zeppelin, and we were more than straining our eyes to catch a glimpse of this one. Judging from the noise of the engine, it seemed as though the thing kept circling around over our encampment, but try as hard as we could we were unable to catch sight of it.

It had not been over us so very long before we heard a motor engine start up at the flying

grounds, and word came around that Lieutenant Hawker was going up after it. Soon we saw an aeroplane shoot up over the tree tops and commence to circle around gaining altitude every moment. It was quickly lost to view, though, and soon the engines of the Zeppelin could be heard no longer, so we concluded that it had made off. Lieutenant Hawker flew until daylight, but, much to his disappointment, he failed to find the Zeppelin.

Another aviator who became famous was Commander Sampson of the Royal Naval Air Service. At the beginning of the war he did so much damage with his aeroplane that a price was put upon his head by the German authorities. We heard that the sum of £1000 was offered for Commander Sampson, dead or alive. This did not make any difference to him so far as his work was concerned, and he did just as much damage after the fact became known as he did before.

Nor was his activity confined to air work. He had an armored car that he used to go

out in, and the exciting event of the day used to be to watch Commander Sampson's return. He seldom failed to bring back prisoners, and the damage he did to the Germans with the machine gun was fearful.

Last spring we had a new type of aeroplane come out, and it was a beauty! It became known as the "British Scout", and it was in this type of machine that Lieutenant Hawker defeated three big German battle planes. It has a very high-powered, high-speed engine, and can pull right away from any other type of machine that flies. It carries one man only, who runs the machine and works the gun too, so he has his work cut out for him.

Before I ever saw a bomb-dropping aeroplane in action I used to imagine that the bombs were dropped by hand. I was much surprised to find that such is not the case. The bombs are hung on little clips under the body of the machine, and are released by a foot pedal arrangement. It is a much quicker and less dangerous method.

The bombs dropped from the machines vary in size and weight, and they run all the way from ten pounds to one hundred pounds. Each bomb has a little propeller at the tail of it. This keeps the bomb nose down in falling, and insures its landing on the percussion cap. As the bomb falls through the air this little propeller whirls at a tremendous speed and makes the weirdest whistling noise one could imagine.

During the summer months a great many air raids were made on moonlight nights. The machines are practically invisible when they reach any great height, and they can get back home and make their landing without very great danger.

When aeroplanes are late coming in, it is very interesting to watch the rockets being sent up to guide them to their landing grounds. These rockets are of different colors, and are sent up at regular intervals until the machine is either safely back or is given up for lost. When the machine is sighted and is circling

down toward the ground, big flares are lighted so as to enable the aviator to pick his spot for landing. The whole thing is scientifically arranged, and there are not many accidents in this part of the work.

One of the most daring parts of the air work is the dropping of spies behind the enemy's lines. I believe this goes on on both sides, and in many cases is successful. The second time I was going on leave to England I had made arrangements to go with one of our fellows from the Flying Corps. We were to start on a Monday morning, and on the Friday before he told me that he was going to make his last flight before going to England, on the following morning, Saturday.

He started out at 4 o'clock Saturday morning with a man and a crate of carrier pigeons in his machine, and he had orders to drop both behind the German lines and return to his headquarters as quickly as possible.

As I said, he started out at four and so far as I know he is not back yet. He may have

AN ANTI-AIRCRAFT GUN IN ACTION.

Drawn by P. Matani for "The Sphere", London, and copyrighted in the United States by The New York Herald Company.

been shot down, he may have had an accident and been forced to land behind the German lines, or any one of a hundred things may have happened. All we know is that he failed to return.

The anti-aircraft gun was practically unknown before the beginning of this war, and there is an enormous chance for improvement in this branch of aërial warfare. It is very interesting to watch an anti-aircraft gun in action, for one can see the gun fired and then see the shell burst a few seconds later.

So far as I know there is no accurate way of finding the range of an aeroplane in motion. The popular way of shooting at a flying machine seems to be that of firing shells in a large circle, using the machine as the center, and then closing in until the aeroplane is dead in line. There is the uncertainty, however, of knowing when to time the shell to burst, and so far as I can see it seems to be pretty much a matter of luck. I heard an average quoted on the number of hits

to the number of shells fired, and the figures were one hit out of every three thousand shells. I cannot vouch for the accuracy of this statement, but I do know that the number of hits is surprisingly small.

The falling of the shrapnel from these shells which burst in the air is rather dangerous, as I can show by narrating an incident which happened to us. We were out in the car near a village called Brandhook, and we noticed as we came along that a German aeroplane was coming directly toward us, and that he appeared to be following the road. Our anti-aircraft guns were playing on him, and the shells seemed to be bursting mighty close to him.

Before he attained a point above us he turned at right angles and made off toward the German lines. We continued our way, and a little further on we came to where an empty auto was standing in the middle of the road. We stopped and looked around for signs of the occupants, but could find none.

When we had been there about five minutes an officer and the driver of the car showed up and said they had been forced to take refuge in a dugout on account of the falling shrapnel.

Holes where pieces of the shrapnel had entered the ground were to be seen all around, and we tried to dig some of the pieces up. We dug down ten inches and had not reached them, so we gave it up as a bad job, and went on to camp. This will show that these pieces of shrapnel are not to be sneered at as being harmless.

Another favorite stunt with aeroplanes is the dropping of hundreds of steel darts on bodies of moving troops, or even on towns, or the men in the trenches. These darts are four or five inches in length and have a sort of four-pointed tail. They are extremely sharp and are heavier at the point than they are at the tail. This causes them to fall point down.

It has been proven that one of these darts dropped from a great height would, if it

struck a man on horseback square on the top of the head, pass through the length of a man's body, through the saddle, through the horse's body and disappear into the ground. I have seen darts that have been dropped, but I have never been where they were falling, and I had no desire to be, either.

There was a German who pulled the greatest little game of bluff on us. We were at a village called Rheninghelst when this fellow came over, and everybody remarked at how low he was flying. Our anti-aircraft guns were letting him have it from all directions, and suddenly his engine stopped and the machine began to fall. The guns let up, thinking that he was winged. He fell to within two or three hundred feet of the earth, when suddenly the machine righted itself, and he skimmed over us toward the German lines. He had the audacity to wave his hand at us as he went by.

It was one of the nerviest things I ever saw. He saved himself by the chance of running

through our fire, for when he was so low he was out of range of the anti-aircraft guns.

Air raids do not always prove as dangerous as they sound. About three or four days before I left the front we had a flock of twenty-three German aeroplanes over our camp, and they dropped bombs for nearly fifteen minutes. Everybody got under cover, and the total loss of life caused by the raid was one mule. If this were always the case the Zeppelins and Avatiks would have to go out of business.

There was very little of interest after Loos. Every day it was the same old routine. Up to the firing line in the morning, and back down again at night. Once in a while we would let ourselves in for a young bombardment, or would have rather a hot session in the trenches when we would happen to get there at the right time, but as far as any important happenings there were none.

CHAPTER XIII

LAST DAY AT THE FRONT

I WILL never forget the last day I spent at the front. It seemed to me that the Germans must have put up a job on me, and just at the moment I was sure that I was coming out of it all right, and that the war was over for me, they were trying to get me.

On December eight I was ordered to report with my car to one of our new officers. I did so and we left for the firing line. When we reached the divisional signal office we left the car and mounted our horses to finish the journey. We got to a place called Krustadt, and stayed there for about half an hour. I hitched my horse to the gate of an old deserted house, and went over to one of our ammunition columns to see if I could get some hot tea.

When I came back, about fifteen minutes later, I found my poor horse down with his front leg gone. A shell had exploded in the yard of this house, and had blown his leg clear off. There was nothing for me to do but to shoot him and put the poor beast out of his misery.

I hunted around among the different units in the vicinity until I found another horse, and then I went up and reported to my officer. We visited some of our batteries, and then came back to Krustadt. The officer told me that he would not need me during the afternoon, and for me to meet him here at 5 o'clock that evening. We hitched our horses to a tree, and the officer went off by himself. Very soon after he had gone some more officers came along and hitched their horses to the same tree. All together there were six animals tied to the one tree.

I went over to the Royal Engineers' place and proceeded to make myself at home. I was feeling happy, for I knew that this was my last day at the front, and I was hoping

to be home for Christmas. Of course I told everybody I met all about my good luck, and we were having a regular little farewell dinner, only we had tea instead of champagne. After it was all over some of the boys went away, and I proceeded to make myself comfortable on a couch the fellows had built up in the corner.

I had been there about fifteen minutes when for some reason or other I got up and went over and sat down by the brazier. I hadn't been off that couch three minutes when a shrapnel shell burst directly over the hut, and I should say fully twenty pieces came through the roof. They went through the floor as if it had been so much paper, and about half a dozen pieces penetrated the couch I had been lying on not five minutes before. There were three of us in the hut at the time, and not one of us was so much as scratched.

The shells were coming over pretty thick then, so we went for the dugouts on the dead

run. As I passed the tree where our horses were tethered a high explosive shell burst in the middle of them and buttered them all over the landscape, but the most of them were hung on the branches of the surrounding trees.

Believe me, I didn't pause one second, I just kept right on going, spitting out horse hair as I ran. I entered a dugout that had about a foot and a half of water in it, but I lay right down in it and was only too glad to stay there. The Germans were keeping up a sweeping fire trying to locate our batteries, and they continued until nearly 7 o'clock that evening.

When 3 o'clock came, and I was supposed to meet my officer, I stayed right where I was, for I knew that I would not be expected to go out and wait by that tree when the shells were falling the way they were then. At 7 o'clock the fire had pretty nearly ceased, so I ambled out to the tree to see what had become of the officer. He was sitting on the ground with his back against the tree. I

told him what had happened, and he asked me if I knew where we could find some more horses.

I said I did, and that it was right on our way back, so we walked about a half-mile until we came to the transport camp, and there we got two other horses and proceeded to the place where we had left the car.

Here the officer decided we would have some tea, so I went into a tent where there were some fellows I knew, and begged some grub. I had just commenced to eat when a shell screamed over and went into the ground about twenty or thirty feet from the corner of the tent. It didn't explode, so we were all right, but I decided that right here was where I quit, and I went out and sat in the car until the officer was ready.

But my troubles were not over yet! On the way back to camp one of the back wheels came off the car and nearly dumped us into the ditch. The officer got a lift down in another car, and I set to work to try and put back

the wheel. It was dark, and the road was muddy and soft, and everything seemed to go wrong. The train left at 1 o'clock in the morning and I was nearly beside myself for fear I would miss it.

When I finally did get in it was after eleven and I had to do some tall hustling to get my things packed, get my grant and tickets, and change my clothes for dry ones and walk half a mile to the station to catch the train. I did it, though, and at 4 o'clock in the afternoon I was in London.

I sailed from Liverpool on the 11th of December and nine days later I was back home in Boston.

It has been a terrible experience, but it has been a wonderful thing for me, in that it has made me appreciate my own home and the old Stars and Stripes as I never did before.

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